

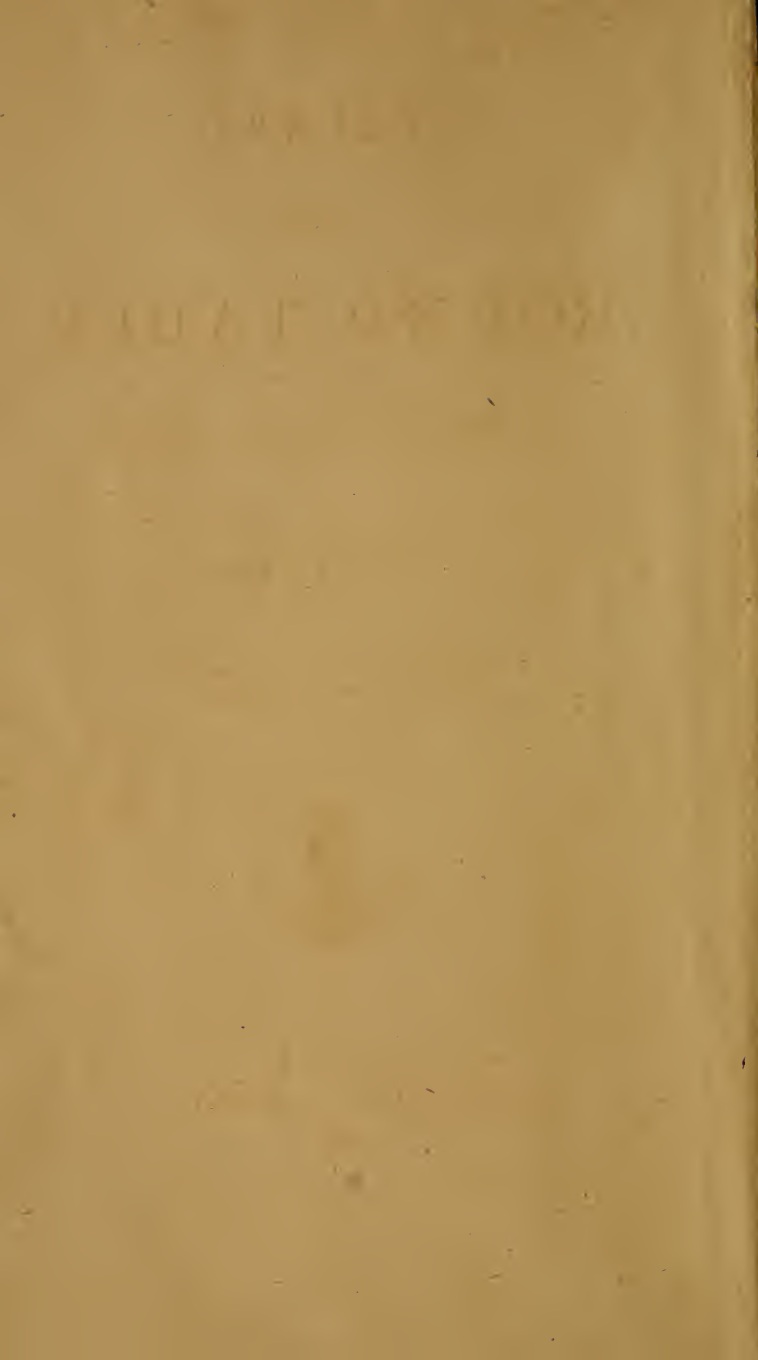
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CRUMBS
FROM
THE ROUND TABLE









Thomas Crumby

CRUMBS

FROM THE

ROUND TABLE.

A FEAST FOR EPICURES.

BY

JOSEPH BARBERO *of New York*

"He looked about him to the left and right,
With the prophetic eye of Appetite."



NEW YORK:
LEYPOLDT & HOLT.

1866.

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BILL OF FARE.

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THIS contribution to epicurean literature is for the most part made up of articles which have appeared in "*The Round Table*," over the signature of "J. B." These initials have generally been interpreted, and correctly, as those of Mr. JOSEPH BARBER. Their frequent appearance has been the source of so much pleasure to the readers of "*The Round Table*," that its editors have been tempted to make this compilation. Some of the articles have appeared in other journals, Mr. Barber having been engaged in writing upon this class of subjects for a number of years. As a culinary critic, fisherman, and singer of country lyrics, he writes of that which he knows, a fact which will become apparent to the reader of these sketches.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

A PREFACE is generally more or less apologetic. The humility with which authors invite attention to the fruits of their labors is proverbial. They seem to regard the public as a creature of somewhat savage, but not altogether ungenerous, instincts, whom it is prudent to conciliate by a show of self-distrust, before venturing within reach of its paw. For my own part, however, I utterly despise the Uriah Heep style of self-introduction; and, therefore, this little volume is tendered to the reading world without the obsequious bow with which some "very humble" writers put forth their lucubrations.

If a book is so stupid, or otherwise objectionable, as to need an apology, it is an impertinence to publish it. No one has a moral right to bore people at their own expense. But the truth is, that, in nine cases out of ten, the author, who asks pardon of the community for obtruding his brainwork upon its notice, is much less diffident than he desires to appear. In his heart of hearts, he laughs ha! ha! and anticipates success. My rule, however, is to take the author who insists that he is without merit at his own valuation, and decline to read his book. I think it only just to his moral character to assume that he has not belied himself.

Taking it for granted that there are tens of thousands of persons who, like myself, take a writer at his word, when he says that his productions are valueless, and not wishing to give society a distaste, in advance, for the following pages, I positively

decline to assert that they are uninteresting. If the essays and sketches have any merit, the good-natured reader will find it out; if otherwise, the critics will not shrink—they never do—from the performance of their “unpleasant duty.” With these off-hand remarks, I leave the “Crumbs” in the hands of my good friends the editor and publishers, to be scattered hither and thither among the tasteful public. May they prove “crumbs of comfort,” and, “like bread cast upon the waters, be found after many days.”

J. B.

NEW YORK, *May*, 1866.

CRUMBS FROM THE ROUND TABLE.

THE ESTHETICS OF EPICUREANISM.

I FLATTER myself that I know what good living is, and how to enjoy it. The man who feeds merely to supply the wants of nature, who simply eats to live, is a person with whom I have no sympathy; while the coarser individual, with whom quantity is every thing and quality nothing, is a fellow whom I heartily despise. It is to beings of a finer texture of soul and body that I address myself, people whose palates respond to delicate flavors as the educated ear responds to melodious music, and who can detect an error in the seasoning of a dish as readily as Arditì would detect a false note in the execution of a symphony.

From the dawn of civilization, good cooks have been held in honor. With the exception of those ungenial Democrats, the Spartans, who mortified the flesh on horrible black broth, and bread that required a hammer to break it, all the classic nations of antiquity were

fond of luxurious banquets. To be sure, their notions of the delicious were somewhat different from ours; but the world was comparatively in its babyhood in those days, and had not arrived at culinary discretion.

The people of Sybaris, in Italy—a city that flourished in the palmy days of the Greek Republics—were among the most liberal of the ancient patrons of good cooks. It must be confessed that the Sybarites were a finical, Miss Nancy set of fellows. They slept on rose leaves, and coddled their cuticles into such a state of extreme sensitiveness, that a leaf with a wrinkle in it gave them pain. They would not permit any noisy work to be done within their jurisdiction, and some Sybarite exquisites, according to an ancient historian, were once thrown into hysterics by the crowing of a cock. But of a good dinner they had a lively appreciation. The giver of such a repast was declared the benefactor of his country, and his cook received a golden crown, and was admitted as a “dead-head” to all the public games. They considered the Spartans—and on that point I agree with them—a parcel of knowing starvelings. A Sybarite, having on a certain occasion been induced to wet his lips with their national *potage*, remarked, with a shudder, that “he no longer wondered the Lacedæmonians sought death in battle, seeing that such a fate was preferable to life with their detestable broth.”

Antony, who lost the world and his life for “a

colored woman," displayed a more delicate taste in his dinners than in his amours. He took a cook with him to Egypt, who was decidedly the Ude of his day, and when the *artiste* was fortunate enough to please the palate of Cleopatra, her infatuated lover gave him a city for his pains, just as I should give a waiter at a hotel half a dollar for securing me a choice cut of venison.

The old Roman kitchen was any thing but a Republic. In fact, the head cook or *Archimagirus* was a regular despot. Standing on a raised platform, and armed with an enormous spoon, pointed at one end like a spear, he not unfrequently smashed the heads and pricked the ribs of his subordinate flunkies, in the intervals between the tastings of the gravies and sauces. The style in which the Roman cook prepared a porker for the table is minutely described by a Latin author, who is thus translated by the elder Disraeli: "The animal had been bled to death by a wound under the shoulder, whence the master-cook extracted the entrails, washed them with wine, and hanged the animal by the feet. He crammed down the throat stuffings already prepared. Then covering the half of the pig with a paste of barley thickened with wine and oil, he put it in a small oven where it was gently roasted. When the skin was browned, he boiled the other side, and then taking away the barley paste, the pig was served up boiled and roasted." In other words, it was roasted,

boiled, and spoiled. They manage these things better in Cincinnati. However, we must not complain of the Roman method of treating the animal, since within the last forty years pigs have been whipped to death in England to make their flesh tender.

It is a sad reflection on the gallantry of antiquity, that up to the era of Charlemagne ladies were rarely invited to dinner or supper parties, and it should be mentioned, as a fact complimentary to the sex, that, from the period when they took their seats at the festive board, the tone of social life improved. At that time, too, they began to manifest an interest in cookery, displaying their talent in the invention of new dishes, and now and then ruining their lords (as they have been known to do in later days) by the magnificence of their tastes and contemptuous disregard of expense. It so happens, however, that the names of but few celebrated female cooks have come down to us from *auld lang syne*. Even in modern days the *cuisiniers* of the masculine gender have eclipsed the lady artists in fame, although, if we take the latter *en masse*, the former can not hold a candle to them.

The Duke of Newcastle—not the nobleman who visited us with the Prince of Wales, but one of his ancestors of the last century—had a cook named “Chloe,” whose sauces for game were something wonderful. Her great triumph was stewed mushrooms, but having nearly killed one of her master’s guests

with a specimen of her skill in that line, the duke ordered all his mushroom beds to be destroyed; whereat, says Horace Walpole, in one of his funny letters, "a voice of lamentation was heard, Chloe weeping for her mushrooms, and they were not."

The golden age of cookery in France was the era of Louis XIV. and Louis XV. It was in the reign of the former that Vatel, the cook of the Prince of Condé, stabbed himself to death with his sword (a spit would have been a more appropriate weapon) because the codfish did not arrive in time to be dressed for a state banquet. More heroic though, in my opinion, was the death of the Austrian consul's female cook at Sinope some years ago. The Russian fleet was blazing away at the Turks, and the cannon-balls were flying thick and fast through the consul's garden, when this courageous young woman crossed the line of fire to gather some herbs for stuffing. Alas! a thirty-two pound shot cut her in two with the thyme and marjoram in her hands. I don't know whether the Austrian erected a monument to her memory or not, but if he did not he was an ingrate. She was clearly an enthusiast in her art, and preferred the risk of death to the sacrifice of a flavor.

Many of the celebrated French dishes now in vogue were the invention of distinguished personages. Madame de Maintenon, the mistress of Louis XIV., was the author of the curl-paper cutlets, which now

bear her name. The dyspeptic stomach of the *Grande Monarque* would not bear grease, and the paper was applied to absorb it from within and prevent its contact without. And, by the way, very delicious things these cutlets in curl papers are. The Bourbons, to a man, were epicures, and their mistresses and courtiers, as a matter of course, turned their attention to the *cuisine*. That stupid old wrong-head, Louis XVIII., got up a very good soup, to which he piously gave the name of *potage à Xavier*, and it is said he was just about to be helped to some of it when he heard of Bonaparte's escape from Elba. Thereupon his spoon and jaw dropped simultaneously, and, without allowing himself even a "hasty plate," he at once made preparations to leave Paris.

It would be easy to show by citations from history, that a refined taste in eating and drinking has generally been a characteristic of well-educated men in all countries. Indeed, the association between literature and good cooking dates back to the dawn of learning. Cadmus, who introduced letters into barbaric Greece, was the cook of a monarch—the King of Sidon. Thus, literature and good living were twins, and as a modern writer well remarks, "to the ex-cook of the King of Sidon we owe, perhaps, all the epics that ever were written."

BREAKFAST.

WITH all their pretensions to epicureanism, the old Romans did not know how to breakfast. Antiquity's fashionable "spread" for that meal, even in the mansions of the patricians, consisted of simple bread and cheese. The "equestrian order" starved themselves in the early part of the day, to gorge on the abominable compounds they called luxuries, late in the afternoon. And yet those mistaken voluptuaries fancied they knew how to live, and while reclining on their couches, in an atmosphere redolent of garlic, and stuffing their epigastriums with sow's paps, incomplete rabbits obtained by the "Cæsarean operation," and lampreys fattened on the flesh of slaves, considered themselves in the seventh heaven of sensuous enjoyment. We only remember to have read of one Roman who cared much about his *déjeuner*—the beastly Galba. Suetonius says he boo-hooed for it, if his servants failed to bring it to his bedside at daylight. His imperial majesty, however, was an exception to all dietary rules; for, after devouring supper for six, overnight, he could dispatch a breakfast of the same proportions, in bed, the next morning. No wonder his

bloated imperial face was of the same tint as his imperial toga.

If travelers in Africa are to be believed, breakfasts in the interior of that continent are scarcely of a kind that would induce an individual not "to the manner born" to rise early to partake of them. Bruce assures us that in Abyssinia they consist of live-ox collops, highly peppered to supply the absence of cooking—the collops being made into sausage-shaped fillets, which are thrust into the mouths of the guests by black Hebes, sandwiched in among the males of the company. The civilized epicure has no objection to a steak only "just done through;" but the Abyssinian style seems, if we may use the expression, to be running "rareness" into the ground. Clapperton, who visited another part of Africa about a third of a century later than Bruce, mentions, among the items of the Sultan of Baussa's breakfast *carte*, grilled water-rat and fried and stewed crocodile eggs. The eggs, it may be supposed, were somewhat musky, but as we have Dr. Kane's testimony that rat soup is not a bad breakfast in the neighborhood of the North Pole, a grilled rodent may possibly be endurable under the equator.

Leigh Hunt, who had a very judicious notion of good living, and who, when he played jackal to Byron, was fed, Tom Moore says, with "sops every day from the lion's own pan," has left behind him a pretty fair recipe for a "breakfast in cold weather." Here it is:

“*Imprimis*, tea and coffee; secondly, dry toast; thirdly, butter; fourthly, eggs; fifthly, ham; sixthly, something potted; seventhly, bread, salt, mustard, knives, forks, etc.” This bill of fare is well enough as a specimen of an Englishman’s idea of the morning meal; but it would not meet the views of a Scotchman or an American. We like the accompaniments of the Essayist’s breakfast better than the collation itself. “One of the first things,” says Hunt, “that belongs to a cold weather breakfast is a good fire. There is a delightful mixture of the lively and the snug in coming down to one’s breakfast-room of a cold morning and seeing every thing prepared for us—a blazing grate, a clean table-cloth and tea-things; the newly-washed faces and combed heads of a set of good-humored urchins; and the sole empty chair, at its accustomed corner, ready for occupation.” A very nice picture; but one would like to have some guarantee for the behavior of the urchins. It was our lot, once upon a time, to breakfast with a being of that genus who, although perfectly good-humored, was possessed of a lively desire to wash his hands in the slop-bowl and put his chubby little feet in the butter—idiosyncrasies of urchinhood which interfere with the sublime calm necessary to epicurean enjoyment and perfect digestion. This may seem to some folks an ill-natured reflection on “rosy childhood,” but we venture to say that the breakfast-table professor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, or

any other man who understands the philosophy of the thing, will entirely agree with us.

Few "peoples," as our Hungary friend, Kossuth, would say, have a better idea of the proper constituents of a breakfast than the "cannie Scots." The "Glasgow bodies," and eke the burghers of Inverness, at the foot of the Highlands, thoroughly understand what is good for the inner man in the morning. Potted *char*—a rare fish of the Scotch lochs—game pies, hot buttered barley bannocks and oatmeal cakes, muffins, rolls, crumpets, waffles, venison pasty, pickled salmon, potted lobster, buttered toast, broiled "finnan haddies," and broiled bacon are among the dainties they set before newly-risen man in that hospitable region. It must be confessed that they flank these comestibles with forbidden diluents—such as Glenlivet and Usquebaugh. But what will you have of it—the climate is drizzly, and the "meikle Scotch mist" seems to quench the fiery influence of the stimulants!

But, after all, an American breakfast—especially in the fall or winter season—is the *beau idéal* of a matutinal feast. "Juno, when she banquets," has nothing equal to it. What is Olympian ambrosia to buckwheat cakes! And then at coffee-making we can beat even the French. Not that we always do it; but there *are* artistes among us whose decoctions of the fragrant berry put the Parisian *cafés* to shame.

Our broiled spring chicken is a thing to thank heaven

upon with epicurean unction. Talk of your English spatch-cocks—they are not worthy to be named in the same decade with it. Done of an amber brown, anointed with fresh butter, and duly seasoned, it is a dish to take the reason prisoner. Some prefer broiled quail, and one might

—“decide without great wrong to either,
It were much better to have both than neither.”

We wonder how the Children of Israel “fixed” their quails. If Moses was the man we take him to have been, he split *his* birds down the back, and cooked them on a gridiron. Again, the American porter-house steak—would that it had a more melodious and less *toperish* name—is an article *sui generis*. John Bull believes in *rump* steak—pummeling it with a rolling-pin makes it tender; and yet, despite this quarter-staff practice, it is *not* tender after all. Old Front-de-bœuf can not compete with us in the steak department. He won’t acknowledge it, for he is one of those obstinate old “heavy fathers” that never give any thing up; but the fact is patent to the unprejudiced of all nations. Of buckwheat cakes we enjoy a monopoly. The less enlightened countries of Christendom have not had the sagacity to adopt this crowning glory of the breakfast table. Like monkeys who warm their shiftless hands by fires which they have not sense enough to keep up, the outsiders of the earth partake with rap-

ture of the products of our griddles, without having the capacity to mix the batter and fry the articles for themselves. Ah! those cylindrical columns of dimpled, umbered pancakes, light as snow newly fallen, and more delicious than "honey or the honey-comb"—how *can* Europe do without them? Baptized with sweet butter, they "almost raise a mortal to the skies," and might "tempt an angel down." One can not write of them without feeling a pleasant tingling of the palate, and a craving sensation a little below the thorax.

THE FRUITS OF JUNE.

IN the first month of summer, the epicure, looking around him, finds abundant reason to thank the Great Provider who perfects with rain and sunshine "the kindly fruits of the earth, so that in due time we may enjoy them."

The cry of "Straw-ber-ees!" in linked sweetness long drawn out, resounds through our streets, and as peripatetic Teuton and Celt, male and female, make proclamation of their advent, we listen with delight to the well-remembered shibboleth. Well do the fruiterers know the public weakness for strawberries. Their windows are a-glow with plump and luscious beauties, newly torn from their leafy beds to tempt the senses of the voluptuary, and we advise all economical persons, pledged to eschew expensive luxuries, to avoid the fruit establishments on Broadway when strawberries make their first appearance. Blessed be the bosom of our common mother that proffers such rosy, juicy cones to our eager lips. If she feasted her children thus daintily all the year round, we for one would never ask to be weaned, but be content to continue always a baby at the breast. Heraldry did well to inwreath the

ducal coronet with strawberry leaves—thus ennobling not the fruit, but the bauble. This, according to Camden, was a Saxon idea, and it proves conclusively that our ancestors who “drew a good bow at the battle of Hastings” were by no means “the swine” that their Norman conquerors represented them to be. “To him who in the love of nature holds communion with her visible forms” gastronomically, there are few among her esculent gifts more agreeable than the lush and ruddy “first fruits” of June. Poetry has not been silent on their merits. Othello’s handkerchief—the one he gave his wife, that had “magic in the web of it”—was “spotted with strawberries,” a proof that his tasteful mother, who subdued his father entirely to her love with it, was accustomed to present it to the old Morisco, filled with Hovey’s seedlings or some other fine variety, whenever she wanted to make a fool of him. French and Italian, as well as Anglo-Saxon rhymers have celebrated the fruit, and a bard of Erin, whose name has escaped the memory of the compilers, has immortalized in dulcet strains the flavor of “a dish of ripe strawberries smothered wid crame.”

Strawberries and cream! What a suggestive theme for an epicurean lyric! Strange that the rhyming Greeks and Romans never touched upon it. What a topic it would have been for Anacreon, who sang in praise of beastly wine-bibbing, till, in conformity with poetic justice, he was choked by a grape. What a

text for Aristophanes, or Philoxenus, or any of the Deipnosophists (Anglice, dinner philosophers) whose couplets are recorded by Athenæus. But perhaps strawberries were unknown to the classical epicures. It must have been so, otherwise they would have bequeathed us a "taste of their quality" in verse.

What poetic prose Epicurus would have improvised over a dessert of strawberries and cream. Let us imagine how that comfort-taking philosopher would have delivered himself thereanent, had he been fortunate enough to have the inspiring subject before him.

"Behold!" he might have exclaimed, "this mound of ambrosial rubies, exhaling ravishing incense, and charged with fluids that would cause the palates of the gods to tingle. Now (suiting the action to the word) I crown its red summit with saccharine snow. (White sugar was unknown to the Greeks, but we are only supposing a case.) See how the shining coronal reddens at the contact, like a light cloud above Parnassus flushed by the setting sun. Ha! here is an ampulla, filled with cream from the meadows of Thessaly, favorite haunts of the clover-seeking bee. May the kine of Tempe live forever! How rich and thick it is—Juno has no such lacteal nectar! (They did not water their cream in the golden age.) Now to make libation. See how the streaming flood topples down the sugary crest of the fruital hillock, sweeping it, an avalanche of sweetness, into the lake of juice below. Slave, a ladle!

(The spoons of two or three thousand years ago were all ladles.) Now I crush the melting cones, and the outgushing crimson life-blood of the fruit wreathes into and marbles the golden cream. What delicious edible lapis lazuli !”

Thus Epicurus might, could, would, or should have said, had strawberries (as well as letters) been cultivated in the groves of the Academy, and by the philosophers of the “Garden,” and cried by peripatetic hucksters in the streets of Athens. We might have put the praises of the most delicious of desserts into more modern and Christian phraseology, but there is nothing like your “word-painting.” With a classical sugar-coating, the grossest anachronisms will go down.

We would willingly give our anti-stoical friend Epicurus an opportunity to say his say while imbibing the delicious compound we have assisted him to prepare ; but there are limits to graphic description, and we know of no combination of words capable of doing justice to the feelings which thrill the organs of taste and deglutition under such circumstances. Sensational writing is powerless to portray them, and in attempting to realize them poesy would “pale its ineffectual fires.”

As the strawberry makes its exit, bobbing its farewell to us from the brims of mint-plumed juleps and amber cobbler—which last were better named “amber gods”—raspberries, next in deliciousness among the fruits of June, appear. Of these thimbles of Pomona,

the golden ones are best, although those of a cornelian hue are chiefly cultivated in this country. In Europe the latter are seldom brought to table, although they make a "jam" of which urchins with a sweet tooth (see Tom Hood) seldom get a *satis*. The red kind are also, upon the whole, better than the golden, with cream; but raspberries and cream are "flat and unprofitable" in comparison with the rich compound at the preparation of which we "assisted" a few paragraphs above. Both the strawberry and the raspberry, like most of the good things of this life, are transient blessings. "Two months, nay, not two months," are the limit of their stay.

"All that's bright must fade,
The brightest still the fleetest.
All that's sweet was made
But to be lost when sweetest."

Even sweet lips lose their honey as they wither, and it is doubtful whether the bees troubled Plato after he had passed his grand climacteric.

Thank Frigidity, however, we can have the flavor of our early fruits after they have faded from vine and bush. Have we not our strawberry and raspberry ice-creams, that cool and enrapture us at a gulp. A rare confectioner is Jack Frost. A benison on the artificial caves where he dwells, like a benevolent troglodyte, the summer long. King John asked winter to "thrust

its icy fingers in his maw" in vain, but into our happier gullets he introduces them sweetened. And by the way, plain ice-cream, with ripe strawberries or raspberries crushed into and intermixed with it, is a compost at once cooling and captivating. An thou hast not tried it, reader, there is yet a new pleasure for thee under the sun.

Something should be said of cherries—though, to tell the truth, they are not a wholesome fruit. Nevertheless, the full-blooded ox-heart, and the white-heart with its glowing sunward cheek, are not to be despised, and, if the digestion be vigorous, even cherries can do no harm. The birds eat them by the peck and do not find them dyspeptic, but then, to be sure, the human stomach is not a crow.

"But enough," says the reader, "of the fruits of June. When the delicious realities are with us, what is the use of all this rigmarole?" Fairly put, we admit, but somehow this sweet season has the same effect upon us that it has upon the blackbirds—it makes us garrulous. A few couplets in honor of our pet month and we have done:

June, fair noontide of the year,
Joy is in thy atmosphere.
Flowers and fruits, together born,
Pour from thy prolific horn :
Perfume, beauty, light, and song,
To thy golden reign belong.

June is here !

Strawberries in the fields are seen
Blushing 'neath their leafy screen ;
Ripening cherries in the lane
Glow like painted porcelain,
And in yonder meadow, hark !
Sings the yellow-breasted lark,
June is here !

With their blushing burden stoop
Rose-briers by the cottage stoop ;
Honeysuckles spice the air,
Blossoms are opening everywhere,
Round whose nectar-cups the bee
Pours his maudlin melody,
June is here !

Stars, bright isles of heaven's blue sea,
Ye may homes of angels be,
And this planet's landscapes cold,
To the scenery ye unfold ;
Yet this world to mortals given
Is to me foretaste of heaven
When June is here !

DINNER AMONG THE ANCIENTS.

THE dinner-time of the Middle Ages was ten o'clock, A. M., the breakfast-time of modern fashion; and wit as only about two hundred and fifty years ago that noon was substituted for the *dixième heure*, as the court dinner-hour in France. In the fifteenth century, a dauphin of France dined at sharp ten; and a French historian has been kind enough to hand down to us his bill of fare. It consisted of rice soup, with leeks or cabbage, a piece of beef, another of salt pork, a dish of six hens or twelve pullets, divided in two, a piece of roast pork, cheese, and fruit. Let us hope that his highness felt better after his refection, which seems, on the whole, to have been more fit for a dozen stout porters than a delicate prince. The dauphin's supper was his dinner dittoed, and it appears, from the account of the historian, that appetite was measured by rank in those days, inasmuch as barons were only allowed half the ration of the heir-apparent; knights, one-fourth; and chaplains and equerries, one-eighth. I am sorry to say that the practice of drinking wine after dinner originated with the clergy. In the early days of Saxon England, the only dessert was grace

after meat; but the chaplain of Queen Margaret Atheling, the Saxon queen of Scotland, having complained to her majesty that the Scotch thanes rose from table before he could pronounce the *post prandial* benediction, she offered a cup of wine to each one of them who would sit still till the thanksgiving was over.

But I am getting discursive. Let us take up the good things of dinner in their regular order. Soup and fish naturally come first. The earliest particular mention of soup that occurs to me is the biblical account of the mess of pottage for which Esau sold his birth-right. There can be little doubt that it was a fine article; a man would scarcely dispose of his inheritance for a dish of *soupe maigre*. Isaac and his son Jacob were fond of soup, and we know how Rebecca made it for them, viz.: of pieces of fresh-killed kid, seethed in milk, thickened with meal and herbs. Not a bad stew by any means; only they had no pepper in those days, and no Worcestershire sauce. The Marquis de Cressey, the famous French gastronomist, had a peculiar soup for Lent, the recipe for which he has bequeathed to us. It was an onion soup, composed of small bulbs, sliced and put into a stew-pan, with a lump of fresh butter and a little sugar. They were turned over the fire until of a fine golden color, when they were moistened with broth, and a little bread was added. Before the soup was served, its flavor was perfected by the addition of two glasses of very old cognac. The probability is,

that the compound was not bad to take. After mortifying the flesh on his *potage*, the Marquis topped off his Lenten fare with salmon and asparagus! Talleyrand introduced Parmesan cheese with soup, and presented after it a glass of dry Madeira. Careme, who stands A No. 1 among French cooks, originated at least a dozen excellent soups, and from Ude, Kitchener, and Soyer we derive upward of twenty more. The inventor of turtle soup is unknown—it is probably the result of a series of improvements dating back to the era when Columbus discovered the West Indies. Be that as it may, it is the king of all soups, and next to it in gastronomic rank stand terrapin stew and mock turtle.

Fish is no less important to a good dinner than soup. There is an Oriental proverb, to the effect that “your Arab despises fish,” which, as the Arabs dwell where fish are not, is equivalent to saying “the grapes are sour.” The Jews are not permitted by their laws to eat fish destitute of scales or fins. Hence, eels, a surfeit of which killed a Christian king, are never eaten by strict Hebrews. A story is told of St. Kevin, a religious gentleman who lived by the fish he caught in one of the Irish lakes, which shows that he was subjected to a severe temptation during one of his piscatorial excursions, but whether he fell into the snare laid for him or not, I do not now remember. It seems that a belle of that ilk, named Kate, put the following leading question to him :—

"You're a rare hand at fishing," says Kate,
"It's yourself, dear, that knows how to hook 'em ;
But when you have caught 'em, agraah !
Don't you want a young woman to cook 'em ?"

If St. Kevin said "No," he was not the Irishman I take him to have been.

Oysters were considered a luxury in Greece and Rome, though heaven knows the Greeks and Romans could have known nothing of the flavor which belongs to the finer specimens of the oyster family. The Mediterranean oysters are literally unfit to eat, being wishy-washy little dabs of gelatine. Ah ! if the Greek philosophers had only tasted our Shrewsburys and Saddle-Rocks, would they ever have inquired if oysters had souls ? Not a bit of it. They would have swallowed the mollusks, and waived the theology.

Red mullet (the fish vulgarly called the "sucker" is a mullet) was a particular weakness of the Roman *gourmands*. Vitellius, Drusus, Tiberius, and all that class of gormandizers, thought nothing of giving as many sestercea as would have amounted to three hundred dollars of our money, for a single mullet weighing five or six pounds. They had rather a disgusting way of preparing the fish for the cook. For the benefit of persons of delicate stomachs, I will give the process. In the first place, the mullet was scaled alive ! It was then dropped into a glass vessel filled with seawater, mackerel's blood, and salt, and as it squirmed

in this pickle, and its color gradually faded from red to white in the agonies of death, the *bon vivants*, lolling on their couches (for the luxurious Romans were too lazy to sit up at their banquets), applauded the spectacle. There was no law against cruelty to animals in ancient Rome, it seems.

Turbot, a fish that does not exist in our waters, though comparatively common in some of the seas of Europe, was another favorite Roman dish. The Romans kept the fish in huge tanks, filled with salt water, and fed them, occasionally, on rebellious slaves, by which their peculiar flavor was no doubt heightened and improved.

Those who have tasted "Albany beef," and know what an immense deal of boiling it requires to get the oil out of it, will be unable to see why the sturgeon is in England a perquisite of the crown. Such is the fact, nevertheless; but however much sturgeon's roe may be relished by royalty, it is truly "*caviare* to the general."

Tradition has transmitted to modern times a curious "fish story," which may be interesting to persons whose organ of credulity is as "a mountain to a mole-hill," compared with their organ of caution. It seems that, in a certain pond attached to a convent in Burgundy, the number of fish always kept tally with the census of the monks. If a monk sickened and died, a fish followed suit. If the convent received a new brother, straightway a fish was supernaturally added to the

pool. Finally the institution went to the dogs, and the fish went to the—well, no matter where; they disappeared. With the exception of the great fish story in the Arabian Nights, this is the most extraordinary bit of piscatory literature extant, and the two are equally authentic.

DINNER AMONG THE MODERNS.

PERHAPS Byron puts the case a little too emphatically, when he calls the bell that summons us to this meal "the tocsin of the soul." Sententious Thurlow tells us, and General Jackson has borrowed the expression without acknowledgment, that "corporations have no souls," and yet corporations are proverbially fond of what are called good dinners. There is, however, a refined enjoyment experienced by the large-minded epicure while discussing the *chefs-d'œuvres* of an accomplished cook, which sordid bodies, born of corruption and held together by "the cohesion of public plunder," can never experience. The poetry of dining is a touch above boards of aldermen. Only men of generous instincts, cultivated tastes and talents, and perfect physical organizations, know how to dine. It does not necessarily follow, however, that because an individual has a palate of horn, to which all flavors are alike, he is therefore a bad fellow. Pancks, who ate as if he were "coaling," had a heart that would have done honor to the most genial epicure; but it is none the less true that a genial epicure is generally a person with kindly sympathies and of a lovable nature—one

capable of appreciating the excellent qualities of a Pancks, though he might object to dining with him, and who would not put his legs under the mahogany of a sleek-headed Caseby, though it were covered with all the edible rarities that wealth could supply.

Although we Americans are, past doubt, "the most enlightened people under the sun," and in all respects fully up to Shakespeare's description of the "paragon of animals," the majority of us have much to learn in the art of dining. It has not pleased Heaven to overstock the American kitchen department with superior artists. On the contrary, most of our cooks seem to have come from the antipodes of that region which sends us such excellent meat. The human intelligences we get from the intelligence offices are far from being as intelligent as they represent themselves to be. Ireland, of course, possesses the finest peasantry in the world, but their culinary education has been neglected; while Germany, if we are to believe Tom Hood, has not yet emerged from the dark ages of cookery. Yet we rely chiefly upon the *help* of these two countries for the preparation of our dinners. Our wives and daughters, although, as everybody knows, they "combine French ease with English modesty," and play freely on the piano, do not, as a general thing, understand the mysteries of gravies and sauces, and the chemistry of puddings.

There is one radical mistake in American cookery

which deserves especial castigation. Until it is reformed, we shall never rank among the "peoples" who understand the esthetics of dining. We do not roast—we bake. This is a degrading confession to make, with "the eyes of Europe upon us;" but it is too true that from the *oven*, not the spit, come at least seven-eighths of the browned joints which, by a conventional fib, we term our roast meats. Fellow-countrymen (and women), this is the chief blot upon our culinary escutcheon—the bar sinister on our kitchen coat-of-arms. Into caves of heated iron our cooks thrust their beef, veal, mutton, pork, poultry, game, etc., and after leaving them there to kill each other's flavors till overdone, take them out, and have the assurance to send them to our tables as things roasted! If the articles were put in one at a time, as victims were cast into the brazen bull of Phalaris, the deed were barbarous; but to bake them together, to the confounding of all distinctions between their several savors, is a solecism in cookery that it would be base flattery to call heathenish. An anonymous tenant of one of our first-class boarding houses, who has wreaked his sorrows in verse, devotes a quatrain to the subject, as follows:

At six o'clock, in hungry mood, at dinner I appear—

The roast beef tastes like beef and pork, the pork tastes very queer.

The pastry has a twang of both! I know, and no mistake,

One oven is responsible for that collective bake!

Who that has had his lines cast in one of those unpleasant places where persons of educated appetites are disgusted at so much per week, will fail to recognize the truthfulness of the stanza.

Then as regards our gravies. But the plural is out of place here. In point of fact, the United States, as a nation, has but one gravy. There are a tasteful few who vary their gravies to suit their dishes—rendering unto mutton that which is mutton's, and to beef that which is beef's; but the great majority bestow upon all the same fearful compound of melted fat, with a precipitate of slush. How it is made, we know not, and hope never to know. There is a certain magic in it, however. It makes every thing which is slushed with it taste the same—reducing all the delicacies of the season to a common Vandal level. We can never rank as a refined nation until this semi-mucilaginous abomination shall have been stricken from our *carte*. Epicurean reader, you know, better than we can tell you, how necessary it is to ask (even at what are considered “good tables”) for “gravy out of the dish,” in order to prevent your slice of beef from being over-slaughed with a greasy avalanche from the tureen.

In the matter of dressing and serving up fish, we are guilty of many Gothisms. We boil, instead of steaming, our salmon and codfish, and send them to table in puddles of fish gruel, instead of perfectly dry (as they ought to be), and inclosed in white damask

napkins. As we have one gravy for our meats, so we have one sauce for our fishes, viz., melted butter, thick and glutinous with flour, and more fit for the paper-hanger's or bill-sticker's purposes than for Christian digestion. Occasionally a sprinkling of minced hard-boiled eggs is stirred into the insipid batter, and then it is called egg-sauce, and the last state of the nuisance is worse than the first. Of shrimp-sauce, lobster-sauce, oyster-sauce, fennel-sauce, and a dozen other condiments that give a rare relish to fish, nine-tenths of even our first families are, we regret to say, profoundly oblivious.

It is also a lamentable fact that a man may dine out twice a week the year through in New York, without encountering in his round half a dozen palatable puddings. Yet there are at least a hundred delectable and wholesome varieties of the article. But pastry is preferred in this country—probably because it is more indigestible. If there be any thing an American likes to outrage, it is his digestion. He appears to entertain no respect whatever for his stomach or duodenum, imposing on them the most hopeless tasks and cruel penances. One of the ways in which he manifests his hostility to them is, by eating against time, and compelling his gastric juices to do the work which nature intended for his teeth. That people who bolt their dinners do sometimes live to be grandfathers may be considered an extraordinary manifestation of tenacity

of life in the human species, under the most unfavorable circumstances.

But enough of censure. Let us turn from baked meats, unwholesome pies, and the lightning dispatch style of mastication, to subjects more agreeable. We have the finest oysters extant, and know how to cook them. Good oysters are the *voluptas suprema* of the epicure, for they are capable of affording more prolonged enjoyment than any other edible. It is impossible to say how many of the gelid luxuries may be swallowed direct from the shell without producing repletion. The excellent creatures carry their own solvent with them, and help to digest themselves. History tells us that the Romans were not insensible to their merits, and when Vitellius went out a-yachting he always had plenty of them stowed away in the hold of his trireme. But what did he or any of his race know about oysters! The miserable Mediterranean bivalve is beneath contempt—a little, flavorless dab of semi-transparent jelly, fit companion for the sea-hedgehogs with which the ancient gourmands were accustomed to mince and stew it. Nor are the English mollusks much better. Put half a table-spoonful of mucilage made of Iceland moss into about the same quantity of a mild solution of copperas, and you will have a very fair imitation of the English “native.” Contrast one of these mistakes of Neptune with a “Shrewsbury” or a “Saddle-rock”—plump, appetizing, salacious—and

commiserate the English epicures. In the art of frying, broiling, roasting, and stewing these gifts of Providence, we stand alone. Newly-imported John Bull says he misses "the coppery flavor, you know;" but, oh! what quantities of them he puts under his capacious vest. He shows his taste, however, by generally eating them raw. The eremite of the sea is most delicious the instant after he has been martyred. Break into his cell with burglarious knife, cut the tie that binds him to his pearly home, and, ere his ichorous juices have quite lost the electric principle of vitality, put the floor of his little tenement to your lips and gulp him in. If there be a sensation more thrilling than that experienced during his brief transit over the palate, we have yet to enjoy it. It may be thought by some of our readers, perchance, that oysters do not properly come under the head of dinner; but we hold the truth to be self-evident—at least to all who have made the experiment—that half a dozen or a dozen on the half shell are the best possible preliminary to the regular courses of a banquet, call the banquet by what name you will.

Lady Morgan had a very excellent notion of the esthetics of epicureanism, and has left on record a description of a dinner cooked by the immortal Careme, which it would be a pleasure to quote, if it were not too long. Her ladyship was the guest of Baron Rothschild, and Anthony Careme—who was to cookery what Bacon was to philosophy—was at the head of his

kitchen cabinet. She says in substance, that it was impossible to conceive that the vulgar elements, fire and water, had any agency in producing such sensuous compounds as the feast comprised. "Distillations of the most delicate viands, extracted in silver dews with chemical precision, formed the *fond* of all." This is rather too hyperbolical perhaps, but the next sentence tells the story better. "Every meat presented its own natural aroma; every vegetable its own shade of verdure." Mark the simplicity of high art. It is only your culinary quacks that extinguish the true flavors of nature's dainties with a superfluity of artificial appliances.

"With less genius," says Lady Morgan, "than went to the composition of this dinner, men have written epic poems; and if crowns were distributed to cooks as to actors, the wreaths of Pasta and Sontag were never more fairly won than that which should have graced the brow of Careme for this specimen of the intellectual perfection of an art, the standard and gauge of modern civilization." With all her foreign affectations and occasional slip-slop, *Miladi* had a very creditable conception of the science of good living.

While looking over a file of English papers a few weeks since, we noticed an advertisement of an institution for the diffusion of culinary knowledge among mankind (or rather womankind), called the "School of Cookery," which has lately been opened in London.

There, for a moderate fee, a servant receives a full course of instruction from a competent *chef*, and, when it is completed, is furnished with a diploma. The idea is excellent, and worthy of being acted upon on this side of the Atlantic, where the comestibles of the land, the rivers, and the sea, are shamefully mis-cooked both by indigenous know-nothings and imported barbarians.

NOTE.—Since the above was first printed, we learn that Prof. Blot, of France, has acted on the above idea, and has been very successful in his school.—Ed. R. T

A FEW WORDS ABOUT PUDDINGS.

MUCH undeserved ridicule has been cast upon John Bull, because of his fondness for pudding. The French have adopted his roast-beef, spoiling it, however, in their kitchens by over-cooking, and insulting it in their bills-of-fare with the epithet "ros-bif;" but they still regard its complemental accompaniment with a feeling akin to contempt. The more fools they, for in all their long list of inflated and inflating *pâtisserie*, there is not a kickshaw equal to it. If there is anything in which motherly Mrs. Bull excels, it is in concocting puddings. She makes them of so many sorts, that "custom" cannot "stale their infinite variety." Fortunately for her well-fed lord, she is not too ethereal for kitchen purposes. She is not endowed with a soul above batter. Whatever her drawing-room accomplishments, she stoops to culinary cares, and thereby "stoops to conquer;" for, after all, *one* of the roads to man's heart is down his esophagus. It is horribly unsentimental, and very disparaging to the creature "in apprehension how like a god," to say so; but when this being, "noble in reason," has wedded a highly educated woman from motives of the purest love, it adds to the fervor and

depth of his affection to find that the same fair fingers that deftly sweep the harp and manipulate the piano can also blend harmoniously the ingredients of a pudding. If it had been the luck of Hamlet to espouse the beautiful Ophelia, he would not have considered her sweet songs the less melodious had she been capable of beating up a *pudding*, which is, we believe, the Danish for the subject of our article.

Of this wholesome and excellent comestible, there are, as everybody knows, innumerable sorts and sizes, and, as "one star differeth from another star in glory," so do they. There are inconsiderable dumplings which may be compared to the lesser lights of the galaxy, and pancakes which may be likened to nebulæ, seeing that they are "collections of matter" (or rather batter), "thinly diffused through a large space," and spheres of sweetness, which may be described as orbs of the first magnitude. Greatest among the greatest is plum-pudding. Once, when a rare specimen of that eminent luxury was before us, and the spirit of jingle upon us, we ventured to celebrate its praise in rhyme. The verses are not worthy of the subject-matter (more properly subject-batter), but here they are. It will be seen that we essayed to be Byronic—a common fault of commonplace bards:—

TO A CHRISTMAS PUDDING.

Orb from a chaos of good things evolved,
Rounded, while plastic, in a tightened rag;

Globe whose creation's not in doubt involved,
 Whose mold and matrix was a pudding-bag.
 No sphere of which astronomy can brag
 Compares with thine. Perchance the sun may be
 A world half fire, half scoria and slag,
 Or it may not: what is the sun to me,
 Since for my system's center I have thee?

I know thy "elements"—when mixed and how—
 Work of a Culinary Providence.
 Methinks I see the raw materials now,
 Fluid and solid, to a batter dense
 Turned by the cook's "supreme intelligence."
 Such was thy origin. Upon my life,
 In thy concoction there was common-sense.
 Toward thee I yearn, thou orb with richness rife,
 "Planned, ordered, and perfected" by my wife.

Probers of earth, geologists, avaunt!
 With all your strata—granite, flint, or slate;
 Look at this "fissure," as with knife aslant
 The "spotted globe" I glibly excavate.
 What's your "formation of remotest date,"
 Compared with this but now together thrown?
 Behold the "specimen" upon my plate!
 Is it not worth—the soft impeachment own—
 Tons of your "hard-pan" and your "pudding-stone?"

Sir Isaac Newton was a wondrous man,
 So was Galileo, ditto Tycho Brahe;
 Fellows that knew of orbs the girth and span,
 And how to cook the public up a star.

But could they make a good plum-pudding?—bah!
 What was their spice of learning good for?—say!
 What use to us are twinkling spheres afar?
 From “Charles’s Wain” our beeves derive no hay,
 The “Dipper” ’s empty, dry the “Milky Way.”

Send your philosophers with me to dine.
 I’ll teach them something that will do them good—
 How to enjoy, in reason, wholesome wine,
 And that a DINNER, rightly understood,
 Is not (Heaven save us!) a mere mass of food,
 But Taste’s rich offering, worth its weight in gold.
 Meanwhile, my dinner waits—I must conclude.
 Orb of my heart! no orbs that monarchs hold
 Are worth one segment from thy circle rolled.

Plum-pudding, like the planet to which it is an honor, was gradually perfected. It was at first mere spoon-meat, but finally acquired consistency, and became the solid luxury we see it now. Robert Argyllon, master-cook to William the Conqueror, having presented to that distinguished fillibuster a dainty dish called *la groute*—otherwise, *plum porridge*—on the day of his coronation, thereupon received as a reward for his palatable invention a fine estate (wrenched of course from some “Saxon churl”) entitled the Manor of Addington. This is not a tradition, but an item of history recorded in Domesday Book, and to be seen there at the present day; and barring the fact that the property was stolen, we are not prepared to say that it

was unrighteously bestowed. From plum porridge, in the fullness of time—plum pudding. The cognomen of the individual who put the porridge into a bag, and compressed it into the smallest possible compass with a ligature, has not come down to us with the improved article. He may have been one of the Stewards, Butlers, or Cookes, whose names figure among the patronymics of the old English nobility, and were undoubtedly derived from the offices they filled. Whoever he was, he deserved well of his country and of mankind.

But this right royal dish, although for “all time,” like Shakespeare, is not for every day. Simpler puddings suffice for ordinary occasions, and their name is legion. For example, Yorkshire pudding, browned under the roasting-joint, and saturated with its savory juices; boiled batter pudding, the fair white brother of plum; ground-rice pudding, a delicious compound of rice meal, eggs, milk, and sugar, lightly baked; light dumplings, made of risen dough, which, when duly boiled (say for twenty minutes), are capital, with wine sauce; Indian pudding (see that the meal is well *scalded*), an indigenous luxury which every American lady *ought* to know how to “fix;” apple fritters, the most piquant of all the sweetened products of the frying-pan; suet pudding, equally good baked and boiled; carrot pudding, sweet-potato pudding, and a host of others with names familiar to us as household words, but which, simple as their composition is, very

few of our cooks, native or immigrant, know how to prepare properly. Any one of them is more agreeable to a healthful palate than the American fruit-pie (which is not a pie at all, but an exaggerated tart), with its sodden under-crust, and flavor of inferior butter. The demon of flatulence lies perdu in that abortion of the oven! Even hasty-pudding, though it has been over-eulogized by Joel Barlow, is better than the premium offered for indigestion in the shape of a double-crust ed pie.

Married ladies who love your lords, give them puddings. If you know not how to make them, take Miss Leslie to your hearts and learn. She is guilty of some errors, but practice will enable you to rectify them. Your husbands are driven to "bitters" by pastry; for some tonic solvent is absolutely necessary to enable their stomachs to assimilate the "leaf crust" and heavy understratum of what are called "home-made pies." The phrase, by the way, is often a misnomer, for not a few of them come from the nearest bakery, or, worse still, the corner grocery.

Consider, O matronly beauty and fashion of America, that of outraged digestion come "peccant humors," and of these irritation and family jars. It concerns the health of your spouses and your own peace, that you cultivate the art of pudding-making, and indeed culinary art generally. Crocheting and Afghan-knitting are pretty amusements; it is pleasant, no doubt, to

spend the forenoon among billowy silks and rippling ribbons at the dry-goods stores ; and gossiping morning-calls are simply delightful ; but, if it is not asking too much of beings only a little lower than the angels, won't you go occasionally into the kitchen—taking your daughters in your hands—and see to the boiling, the baking, and the roasting ? It is a shame, we know, to burden you with such plebeian cares. What is man that you should be mindful of him—the selfish tyrant ? But you wish him no harm, we are sure, or yourselves either ; and yet, where there is no proper supervision in the kitchen department, who can say that there may not at any time be “ death in the pot ! ”

VEGETARIANS AND VEGETABLES.

THE thin-blooded philosophers who insist on classing man with the herbivorous animals misrepresent him in spite of his teeth. His dental apparatus is as well fitted for piercing and rending as for crushing and grinding, and from the shape and sharpness of his incisors it is fair to infer that Providence intended him to eat beef with his potatoes. He *can*, it is true, live on bran bread and garden esculents; indeed, we have known several white-faced individuals who sustained nature, after a fashion, on this sort of diet; but their milky complexions were a verification of the proverb, "You cannot get blood out of a turnip." Benjamin Franklin, when an apprentice, tried vegetarianism, but soon returned to his mutton, and so ravenously that he devoured an entire leg of it, on which several of his friends had been invited to dine, before the expected guests had made their appearance. He confesses in his autobiography that the appetizing savor of the roasted joint overcame his respect for the laws of politeness and hospitality. Sylvester Graham, who taught that the relation between lenten fare and longevity was that of cause and effect, had many

disciples during his lifetime ; but as he unfortunately threw discredit on his own theory by dying at the age of fifty or thereabout, his system subsequently fell into disrepute, and we are acquainted with several renegades from Grahamism who are now enjoying a ripe and ruddy old age, under the influence of porter-house steaks and other animal stimulants. Some beef-eating wag has satirized the idiosyncrasy of the famous eschewer of meats rather happily in the following stanzas :

“ There was Graham, a patron of squashes and bran—
He whose Christian name was Sylvester ;
He was pale, slight, and dry, quite a gravyless man—
Was this fanatic roast beef detester.

“ He delighted in biscuit, he doted on rice,
And all meats did forever aside throw,
And averred that carnivorous tastes were a vice—
In the midst of his triumphs he died, though.”

Nevertheless, vegetables are essential elements of good living, and as healthful as they are delicious. It is Jeames Yellowplush, we believe, who describes the most unexceptionable “swarry” he ever sat down to, as consisting of due proportions of mutton and turnips. The Romans, who understood the principles of hygiene nearly as well as we understand them, and applied them much more rigidly than we do, regulated the use of “garden sauce” by penal statute. Every citizen was

compelled to temper his flesh diet with "greens" enough to keep his blood cool, and, from their connection either with the enactment or enforcement of the laws relating to vegetable food, many of the great families of Old Rome seem to have derived their appellations. The name of Lentilus tells its own story; Fabius is from *faba*, a bean; and Cicero from *cicer*, a kind of pea.

The bean was a pet esculent of the ancients. Isodorus says it was the first morsel that passed down the throat of man; but, as his information on the subject must have been somewhat vague, we do not yield implicit credence to his *ipse dixit*. Of all the *faba* tribe, commend us to the Lima bean. The haricot blanc, or white kidney-bean, is also excellent, whether eaten in its immature state, pod and all, or when full grown and without its sheathing. It gives its name to a savory French stew, of which, however, it is very seldom an ingredient. Beans should be steamed, not boiled, and the only dressing they need is a little salt and a lump of fresh butter. New England would scarcely pardon us if we failed to mention its staple luxury, salt pork and baked beans; and so, not to be uncourteous to the orientals, we freely admit that their favorite pabulum is exceedingly palatable—to those who relish it. Let it not be imputed to us as a fault, but rather as a misfortune, that we prefer the two articles separate, and do not violently affect either. Still we would quite as lief partake of the dish sacred

to Saturday night in the "land of steady habits," as of raw kidney-beans dressed salad fashion—a Visigothic abomination eaten with great gusto by the first Napoleon. Possibly the Little Corporal's caprice in the matter of pulse may have grown out of his admiration for Alexander the Great, his military model, who introduced the haricot blanc from India, and set the fashion of bean salads in Macedon and Greece, whence it was probably transmitted to Rome.

The Latin race seem to have been remarkably fond of peas. The rowdy Roman youths were accustomed to munch them at the circus and the theater, just as our Bowery boys discuss peanuts in the Thespian temples of that locality; and pea-peddlers roamed about the Coliseum while the bloody sports of the arena were in progress, shouting "Peas! peas! gray peas!" as vociferously as the venders of oranges and cakes cry their wares in modern "amphitheaters." Wisely spake Solomon, when he said, "There is nothing new under the sun." Repetition is the law of history.

And yet there are exceptions to the rule, for after all the Romans knew nothing about *green peas*. These dainty products of the kitchen-garden were an untasted luxury until the middle of the sixteenth century. They did not exactly blush unseen, but nobody thought of shelling and cooking them. At length a Frenchman—may his name, which was Michaux, live forever!—discovered that they were edible. And here

let us drop a tear of commiseration over the privations of our Christian ancestors. Up to the year 1550, or thereabout, they ate their spring lamb without green peas, and without mint sauce! Let us be thankful that we live in an age when marrow-fats and mint are universally appreciated! By the way, a sprig of the latter should always be boiled—or rather steamed—with the former. It imparts to them a rare flavor. There be cooks of heathenesse who make *pea-soup* of their green peas, sending them to table in a puddle of green water that looks as if it had been dipped from a stagnant pool. We are sure that no reader of the *Round Table* permits such *gaucheries* in his or her cuisine. Solution of pulse is a thing abominable.

Treatises innumerable have been written on the potato, and many of them include the fib that it was sent by Raleigh's Virginia colonists to England about the year 1586. As it is not indigenous to any part of North America except Mexico, and could not have been naturalized on the banks of the Roanoke early enough to have become an export at that date, the *canard* is palpable. It was probably introduced into Europe from Quito by the Spaniards, but did not reach England until several years after the period usually assigned to its advent there. Even as late as the middle of the last century it was described in a London publication as "a root found in the New World, consisting of knobs held together by strings,"

and which "perhaps, if you boil it with dates, may serve to keep soul and body together among those who can find nothing better." It is a singular fact that the sweet potato, now almost obsolete in Europe, was a "delicate dish" at English tables years before the "curse of Ireland," as Cobbett maliciously calls our mealy old friend, had crossed the Atlantic. The potato, as we all know, is not what it was. "Modern degeneracy" has reached it. It is apt to be as rotten at the core as a mercenary politician. Moreover, it is shamefully misused in the cooking. The French profess to have a hundred ways of preparing it, but after all it is best when simply boiled, baked, or roasted. Cooked any way, however, it is preferable to its coarse cousin, the West Indian yam, which is the flattest and most insipid of vegetables.

Cabbage for those who like it. For our part we leave it to the Teutons. *Sauer-kraut* and *slaa* may be ambrosia to Germans and Hollanders, but so is Limburger cheese, and our olfactories have their little prejudices. The cabbage, like the onion, is a *reminiscent* vegetable. The Egyptians made a god of it, which, however, was no compliment, as they had a knack at deifying nuisances. Hippocrates recommended it for the colic—probably on the homeopathic principle, *similia similibus curantur*. We Anglo-Saxons, while tolerating it on our tables, have shown our contempt for it by manufacturing out of the noun-sub-

stantive *cabbage* a verb and a pair of participles of infamous significance.

But the cabbage has a lovely relative that cannot be too highly extolled. Live the cauliflower! The flora of the temperate zone has nothing equal to it. One might fancy its foam-like efflorescence a whip-syllabub dropped from the milky way into a goblet of green leaves. It is the white rose of the kitchen garden; a natural *omelette soufflée*; the curds and cream of vegetation; the—but we are confusing metaphors in our desire to do it honor. When boiled to tenderness—not to “rags”—a spoonful scooped from its bulging center, anointed with melted butter that is not paste, and judiciously salted and peppered, is a morsel which it would be faint praise to call delectable. Alas that we must wait until toward autumn for the cauliflower! Rome had a poor substitute for it in the broccoli, and yet Tiberius and his son Drusus sometimes all but fought for the lion’s share of that more diffuse and far less delicious vegetable.

Is asparagus worthy to rank with the cauliflower? We hardly know; but could

——“decide without great wrong to either,
It is much better to have both than neither.”

Pliny, who appears to have had a lively sense of the value of creature comforts, considered asparagus a dainty intended by nature to grow everywhere. But

nature, unassisted, cannot produce the article in a condition fit for the table of an epicure. It requires careful cultivation to raise those large succulent stems of which the cuneiform tips are mouthfuls. Terra requires to be stimulated with much ammonia before she is strong enough to mould such vegetable arrows and shoot them up into the light, and it is only after attempting the exploit for three successive years that she accomplishes it satisfactorily. It must be confessed that eating asparagus is not a graceful employment, but by frequent practice you may learn to catch the inverted apex exactly at the proper angle every time, always providing that the "grass" is not too limp and spindling. In the days of the Cæsars, three stems of Ravenna asparagus, we are told, weighed a pound. The world-conquerors understood market-gardening thoroughly, it seems. But, perhaps the statement was more exaggerated than the asparagus. We incline to believe that some of the vegetable stories of antiquity are as "fish-like" as they are "ancient." For example, the Hebrew record makes mention of radishes so gigantic that a fox could burrow in one of them, and raise therein a litter of half a dozen cubs or so—a tale that has a somewhat legendary flavor. Much asparagus is ruined by overboiling. The green part should be cooked just enough not to break with its own weight. It is not necessary to boil the vegetable until the handle is of that consistency.

It is quite impossible to do justice to the luxuries of the kitchen-garden in a single article, so we must reserve for the present what we *could* say, if space permitted, touching scores of them which deserve honorable mention. Our idea of culinary vegetables is that they are excellent accessories of the banquet, but not very desirable *solus*. We remember dining several years ago with Mr. Seward, then governor of the State of New York, at the Graham House, a noted vegetarian boarding-house. The dinner consisted exclusively of vegetables and fruits, and when it was over the landlady asked the governor how he liked it. "Very good, madam," said Mr. Seward, "very good *indeed*—for *supper*." From the quizzical look he put on as he made the remark, we inferred that he would have been glad of even a "small penny-worth" of beef as a corrective of that "intolerable quantity" of succulence.

Man is carnivorous as well as herbivorous, and, if fed on a diet of greens, is apt to hanker after "the flesh-pots of Egypt."

FISHING.

I DON'T believe that since the Diluvian epoch, when Noah and his boys angled from the ark, for recreation and a chowder, there has existed a more enthusiastic fisherman than myself.

The sun was in Pisces when I was born—a significant sign of my fishy future. At the age of one year I was predisposed to worms. At three, I began to dissect flies and study their anatomy; and at four I was in the habit of hooking everything within my reach. Before the close of my first lustre, the natural bent of my genius was still more shinningly developed. I boned a skein of my mother's sewing-thread, tied it to the lash of my father's gig whip, and, with the fragment of one of my aunt's hairpins, commenced angling for tittlebats in the frog-ponds. My father, thinking such precocity should be rewarded with a rod, gave me one.

When I was about eight years old, our family removed from the suburbs of New York to a villa up the Hudson, my father having been very successful in securing the shiners. I had now the satisfaction of dropping my "dobber" into the river at Dobbs' Ferry. It was the scene of the first notable event in my pisca-

torial career. One hot day in August, 18— (never mind the units and tens), I rushed into the house, shrieking, in my childish treble, "Here's a bass!" and waving aloft a squirming monster that must have weighed full half a pound. The agitation was too much for me. Brain fever supervened, and for weeks shoals of scaly horrors, of all sizes, shapes, and colors, wandered through the convolutions of my juvenile cerebrum in mad confusion. The doctors thought it would end with water in the head, but I recovered.

The fisher-boy is father to the fisher-man. The "ruling passion" grew with my growth, and strengthened with my strength. Strange to say, it still waxes, though I am on the wane. I have fished in most of the principal waters of the world, from the line to the neighborhood of both the poles, but have found no sport equal to that afforded by the streams of America. The big "cats" of the Mississippi and its tributaries, the swift and vigorous muscalonge of the St. Lawrence, the streaked bass of our northern inlets and rivers, the splendid salmon of the Columbia and Sacramento, the large black, red, and white trout of the lakes, with many other of the Goliaths of our inland seas and great water-courses, are no mean game to grapple with, even for a fisherman who "travels on his muscle." A thirty-pound "cat," rushing furiously up the current of the Mississippi, with the shank of a hook grasped in its vice-like jaws, like a bit between the teeth of a runaway

horse, is not the easiest thing in the world to land. The flexors and extensors of both arms will have all the starch taken out of them before the struggle is over, and the blunt-headed brute is hauled up the clay bank, protesting, with loud sternutations, against being hoisted out of his native mud and water. But what delicious soup can be decocted out of his ugliness. A chowder is delectable, but cat-fish soup is a *morceau* that is more so.

The muscalonge of the St. Lawrence and the lakes is an acrobat. Built like the pike—of whom he is the big brother—for feats of agility, he no sooner feels the barbed steel in his gullet, than he commences a series of writhings and contortions that would astonish an "India-rubber man." He makes a semi-circle of himself, and then springs back to a "normal" position as suddenly as a tense bow when the string is cut. He zig-zags horizontally, darts upward, darts downward, spins round, turns somersaults, and finally, if all these dodges fail, launches his lithe body, with a quiver, three feet into the air, and, coming down head foremost, darts off at a right angle like a streak of lightning. If this last maneuver does not break the tackle, the muscalonge gives in, and suffers himself to be lifted out of the water without betraying the slightest emotion. But for all that, in dislodging the hook from his mouth, look out for the *chevaux de frise* that guards the entrance—the spikes are sharp.

The bass, the salmon, and the lake trout are delightful fish to tussle with in the water, and, when glorified by an accomplished cook, the pride of the table on land. But, after all, the *brook trout* is the fish for me. It is the sliest, the cutest, the daintiest, the most beautiful, the purest, the most delicious of swimming creatures. Brook trouting is the very poetry of angling. It is an intellectual amusement, too, and requires as much caution, calculation, and prescience as a game of chess; as fine touches of art as are necessary to perfect a picture or a statue. With his gold and silver thread, his silk and feathers, the artistic trouter should be able so to counterfeit any fly as to deceive its own mother. He should know, precisely, what kind of fly is the trout's particular weakness in every variety of season, weather, and locality; and, in fact, he ought to have an almost clairvoyant knowledge of the workings of the troutal mind. Thus accomplished, possessed of the necessary executive skill, and supplied with the best implements that a Conroy can furnish, let him go forth in the cheerful May or early June to dimple the brook with his entomological forgeries. Betimes in the morning let him go, for the trout is an early riser—to the fly. He will fish up the stream, of course, for the fish lie with their heads that way, and as they cannot look backwards, like a hare, he can cause his mock insect to alight in advance of them without being himself observed. Through the meadow

where the rivulet, scarce a stride across, glides silently through the grass ; along the gravelly bottom, where it sings and gurgles among the pebbles ; through the gaps between the stony ridges, where it chafes and dances and raises its tiny roar among the splintered rocks ; and across the woods, where it turns, and doubles, and feigns to sleep in quiet pools, he must pursue

“ The *noiseless* tenor of his way.”

In every promising nook, on every inviting eddy, at the foot of every mimic cataract—in fact, in every spot where a trout would be likely to resort for fun or food or privacy—his fly must settle. After each deposit in his “creel,” he may look around and admire the prospect, open his ears to the song of the spring birds, and sniff up the fresh odors which the world exhales in turning green. But all these things are to the trout-fisher as if they were not, while he is professionally engaged ; it is only in the pauses of his art that he ventures upon a parenthetical glance at the general features of the landscape. His basket filled, however, he has leisure to be sentimental, and can sit down on a fence and invoke the muses, if he happens to have the gift of jingle.

But I am getting out of my depth, and possibly exhausting somebody’s stock of patience. My sole object in writing this article was to ventilate my enthusiasm

for the "gentle craft" in print. Felix Grundy said he was born a veteran—I was born a fisherman. When I read, in Dr. Livingstone's book, of a region in Africa where there was no water, I leaped from my chair in an agony of commiseration, exclaiming, "Miserable aborigines! what do they do for fish?" If age or rheumatism should debar me from visiting the fish-frequented streams, I intend to have an aquarium constructed in my library, and angle in it from an easy-chair. I want to enjoy, as long as possible, the greatest pleasure this world can afford me, not knowing whether there are any fish in the next, or, if there be, whether it is permissible to catch them.

THE STREAMS.

THE streams!—how pure, how beautiful,
How holy do they seem,
When somber twilight's shadow cool
Subdues their golden gleam,
Where, in the willow-curtained pool,
The wave-tired waters dream!

Where by the alder-circled cove
And round the reedy isle,
The peering wild-fowl softly move
In many a shadowy file,
And swallows dimple, as they rove,
The silent lapse the while.

River! where once in thoughtless mood
I cast the whistling line,
Above thy liquid solitude
No more my paddles shine;
My oar is in the world's fierce flood,
More dangerous than thine.

But though life's flowers their leaves unclothe
Beneath its vernal beams,
Yet memory from beneath its snows
A blossom oft redeems,

And wafts the scent of spring's first rose
Athwart our winter dreams:

And thus, although youth's locks of gold
Have long turned silver-gray,
Visions of boyhood's pastimes bold
Around me seem to play,
And, by the streams I loved of old,
My soul makes holiday.

SUPPER.

DESPITE the foul fiend Apoplexy, and the Protean imp Dyspepsia, men will sometimes eat late and luxurious suppers. If inordinate cups are unblessed, inordinate meals, eaten at hours when the inner man requires rest after the chemical and mechanical labors of the day, are equally undeserving of Heaven's benison; and when the two evils are combined, as they often are, the double excess deserves something more than a negative rebuke from nature, and, sooner or later, always gets it. People who gorge and stupefy themselves with indigestible food and strong drinks, just before going to bed, are not *bon vivants*, but the reverse, and although they may say grace over their feast, it will assuredly not be blessed, but, as poor Joe says in "Bleak House," "tothered." Such suppers are not included in the esthetics of epicureanism. They are the carnivals of debauch, and utterly abhorrent to that "quintessence of dust," the refined epicure. To such a one it is unnecessary to say, "pray you avoid them."

It is our belief that immoderate suppers tended to produce the decline and fall of the Roman empire. Gibbon does not say so, it is true. It would have

spoiled the sonorous march of his stately periods to intimate that to over-indulgence, at untimely seasons, in minced hedgehogs, stewed lampreys, fried grasshoppers, baked dog, escalloped snails, and such "small deer," the nation "that filled seven centuries with a rapid succession of triumphs" owed its demoralization and decay. Yet we know that from the period when the world-conquerors became gluttonous, and commenced drinking Falernian *ad libitum*, as if it had been lager-bier, the *diminuendo* movement of the empire commenced. As its suppers increased, its territories diminished. It became dyspeptic and peakish. Its armed hand trembled, its legs grew gouty, and under the heavy blows of barbarians, who lived on simple fare and retired to rest with the crows, it finally went to the bad.

It was the same with the Greeks. As long as they adhered to their "bloodless suppers" of herbs and fruit, and bread, they did well. But when their sensualism attained such a pitch that a parasite on his way to a nocturnal feast turned back unless he heard a roaring in the kitchen chimney of his patron and saw thick clouds of smoke ascending from its top, then Greece began to lose its prestige. In vain did that sage, though henpecked heathen, Socrates, stride into the supper saloons crying, "Beware of such food as persuades a man to eat though he be not hungry, and of those liquors that will prevail with a man to drink

though he be not thirsty." Laïs gave her *petits soupers* in spite of the sages, and the fast men and women of the day thronged to her evening parties, surfeited themselves with unwholesome viands, and got disgracefully drunk on Chian wine. National indigestion, superinduced by late suppers, predisposed the Greeks to defeat, and hence their overthrow at the battle of Cheronea, and entire subjugation by Philip and Alexander. As long as the Spartans supped on coarse bread, sopped in lenten broth, they were invincible.

If we go further back into antiquity, we still find nocturnal gluttony exercising a disastrous influence over public affairs. It was at a sumptuous midnight banquet, in his pavilion on the Euphrates, that Sardanapalus was surprised by the non-supper-eating Arbaces and Beleses, and hence the downfall of Nineveh and the collapse of the first empire of Assyria. Belshazzar, although the grandson of a vegetarian (Nebuchadnezzar), appears to have been fearfully addicted to excessive eating and drinking after dark, and he too was suddenly pounced upon in the midst of his midnight repast, when he was unable either to fight or fly; and the next morning, at breakfast-time, it was announced by the heralds of King Cyrus that Babylon the Great had fallen. In this event we have a remarkable manifestation of the fact that Providence does not approve of late suppers.

The Anglo-Saxons, prior to the Norman invasion,

were the most prodigious eaters of their day, and they sometimes prolonged their evening feasts into the small hours, devouring immense quantities of solid meat and swilling vast beakers of spiced mead and hydromel. It may have been the obese habit of body and shortness of breath, engendered by such gormandizing, that led to their defeat by the more temperate and active Normans at the battle of Hastings. Certain it is that the Normans introduced into England a more rational, and, at the same time, a more enjoyable dietary than that of the "Saxon hogs," as they were wont to call the subjugated race, and that the Normanized English waxed in strength and wisdom on their improved fare. William the Conqueror and his followers supped at five o'clock P. M., and turned in at nine. Their final meal for the day was therefore thoroughly digested before they went to bed. When they sought repose they found it, and the next morning awoke like giants refreshed, and ready for raids, captures, and confiscations.

Until the days of the Stuarts, the English supper hour was from four to six, but that unhappy race made it later, and, with the aid of strong Hungarian wines, converted the meal into a prolonged debauch. And see what came of it. Charles I. lost his head; Charles II. died of apoplexy or something of the kind, superinduced, probably, by overloading his stomach at untimely seasons; and James II. succumbed to a second

William the Conqueror, who supped at about the same hour as William I.

In the reigns of the Georges, however, the English got into a habit of taking their suppers later than ever, and of drinking three or four glasses of hot spirits-and-water after them, by way of nightcap. The fourth of that interesting quaternity, humorously styled "the first gentleman in Europe," ate monstrously at night, and generally reeled to bed (when he was not carried there) full of meat and fiery potables. He lived longer than could have been expected under the circumstances, but during the last fifteen years of his life was decidedly the most bloated and unwholesome-looking animal within the limits of his own dominions.

Fortunately, the day when enormous suppers were followed by enormous drinking has gone by in Great Britain, and the health of the United Kingdom, physical, moral, and political, has, we have no doubt, been vastly improved by the change. The quiet and exemplary Victoria put her little foot down peremptorily against such doings, and thereby saved thousands of her lieges from the nightmare and other ills that arise from over-stuffing and tippling at hours when all Christian people, except policemen and military sentinels, should be in their beds.

We Americans ordinarily take our last meal for the day at from six to seven o'clock. We have our game suppers, and oyster suppers, to be sure, now and then ;

but even these are comparatively light affairs, and the half bottle or so of champagne a-piece that helps to give them zest, does not stultify us. Nevertheless, it is better to avoid such indulgences. Breakfast at eight, dinner at two, and tea and supper together at seven, will be found a good *régime* for health. And then to bed (as a rule) at half-past ten or eleven, with an even pulse, a cool head, a quiet stomach, and a clear conscience.

To live well is one thing, to live "fast" another. The man who desires to enjoy life cannot afford to play tricks with his digestion. The stomach is a most unruly member, and resents all such cavalier treatment, to the pain and sorrow of the experimenter. To outrage the organ at bedtime, is to risk being haunted by retributive demons all night long, and to be in peril of a fit of hypochondriasis the next day. Temperance and regularity are essential portions of the esthetics of epicureanism.

*OCTOBER—SENTIMENTALLY AND SENSUOUSLY
CONSIDERED.*

REAMS have been written on the sylvan glories of the American autumn. Such pictorial thinkers as Brainerd, Bryant, and Washington Irving have reproduced them in thoughts that breathe their spicy fragrance and burn with their matchless splendor. As the season returns, memory recalls the old pictures of these poet-limners, and even amid the filth, the evil flavors, the coarse tumult of this sordid Babylon, the solemn quiet of the musky October woods seems to steal in upon our hard city natures, and tranquilize our restless city souls.

Say not that the theme is hackneyed. Custom cannot stale its infinite poesy. Could we live a thousand years, the Eden that comes down from Heaven upon the earth with the sweet October sunbeams would charm our age as they charmed our youth and our maturity. It seems as if one were nearer Heaven during this "Sabbath of the year." The rural world looks saintlier than in the work-day season, when its mission is to grow. Nature ceases from her labors, puts on her holiday garments, and lapses into an ecstatic trance.

Wise is the citizen who goes out from the pent-up town into her large domain, to walk with her in her radiant dream, until the premonitory touch of winter begins to dissolve the delightful vision. Now, ere her features begin to stiffen and shrink in "cold obstruction's apathy;" now, ere she puts on her white grave-clothes, and goes down into her hard sepulcher, there to lie until spring, dressed in floral garlands, shall come to roll away the stone; now, while intensest green clothes the pastures, and all the hues of sunset flame on the wooded hills; now, when the forest walks are paved with mossy verdure, and red, and purple, and yellow berries—vegetable gems—lie thick on the soft carpeting; now, while parasitic plants drape the rugged pillars of the sylvan temple with scarlet and gold, and hang in graceful festoons—that put to shame the most gorgeous upholstery of art—from tree to tree; now, when the tawny nuts and acorns patter down with a pleasant sound on last year's withered leaves, and the squirrels are a-foraging; now, ere the wood-thrush and the wren have ceased to warble, and while the late wild-flowers are still a-bloom; now, while the insect world is humming its melodious death-song; now, when the resplendent nights are lovelier even than the days, and the moon and stars seem to come nearer to the earth, as if enamored of its marvelous beauty—now is the time to leave the man-made town and give the soul a holiday in God's land.

Nor does this magnificent month delight the spirit alone. It is richly fraught with edible blessings that tickle the sensibilities of the sensuous. And let it not be supposed that animal and poetic enjoyment are incompatible. A poetic temperament refines the appetite, and a fine appetite, well served, tends to sustain and vivify a poetic temperament. Thought cannot soar on a lenten diet; luxuriant (or luxurious) imaginings were never yet born of Spartan fare. Kind Providence is cognizant of this important metaphysical fact, and hence has endowed sentimental autumn—the season when the divine afflatus is most inclined to stir within us—with a rare assortment of creature comforts. In October all the meats become fat and juicy. October beef, mutton, and veal are no more like the same comestibles in mid July than one's age-dried and stringy grandmother is like a plump, elastic Hebe in her teens. And, then, look at the autumn dessert. Tilt your horn of plenty, buxom Pomona, and let us devour, with epicurean eyes, its contents—tasting the choicest of them now and then as we pursue our inquisition. Thanks to a tasteful Creator for these pears—"Bartlett's" and "Duchesses," under whose golden skins lusciousness lies a-melting, and voluptuous "Flemish Beauties," whose flushed cheeks an anchorite might be excused for biting. Here are grapes—Isabellas, Concords, and Catawbas—from the vineyards, and magnificent clus-

ters nursed to absolute perfection under glass. Thanks to Noah or Bacchus—some say that Bacchus was none other than the great ark-wright of Scripture under a heathen name—for giving us the vine. Thanks to art and culture for blowing its natural globules to such full proportions, and filling them with supernatural flavors. Let us not waste pity on Anacreon. The poet-epicure had enjoyed the fruit before he was choked by the seed. He died with the flavor of the Chian grape upon his palate! Ah!—melons. The cantelope, rough as a ball of cordage without, but lined with edible gold, every mouthful of which is worth a prince's ransom. And what an aroma! Azim inhaled no odor more entrancing in the seduction-chamber of the Veiled Prophet. These water-melons, too—but let us cleave one through the center. Lo! a double hive, full of honeycomb more delicious than was ever stored by the bees of Hybla in the "hollow oak." Wait for us a moment, good reader, while we bury our face in a blushing segment—and take at once a bath and a banquet. There! our whole inner-man is refreshed and comforted. Green-gages—eh? No wonder that some fifty years ago the "solid men" of England used to call a hundred thousand pounds a "plum." The green-gage, we take it, had been then but newly introduced, and shop-keeper John Bull, as he smacked his lips over its gum-saccharine, naturally compared it to that apple of his eye, his gold. What a

compliment to the fruit, that money-loving John should have likened it to a hundred thousand pounds! What are these?—nectarines and apricots. We have seen better in Europe; for either from lack of proper culture or because the climate is not propitious to them, the nectarine and the apricot dwindle and degenerate on this side of the Atlantic. They manage *these* matters better in France. Here we have a shower of apples—Spitzenbergs, Seek-no-furtheres, Baldwins, and Greenings. Excellent, no doubt, but we have no relish for them in the presence of the rarer autumn fruits. Let them be sent to the store-room until winter shall make them welcome—they will mellow in the mean time. A few peaches roll out of your cornucopia, Pomona, but they are the lees of the crop. The sumptuous specimens of the tribe went out with September, and these are cold-humored and sallow. Embalmed in white brandy, duly sugared, however, they will not be bad to take in December.

And so, Pomona, we come to the little end of your horn, and to the end, too, of the space to which we must limit this gush of sentiment and sensuousness. Vale, reader, until we meet again in print, which, if this screed find favor with thee, we swear by all that is egotistic shall be before the waxing moon that gilds these fair October nights has gone the way of moons and men.

THE POETRY OF GOOD CHEER.

DUGALD STEWART, the philosophical essayist, ranks accomplished cooks with great poets, and in reading the memoirs of distinguished men the refined epicurean is pleased to find that, as a general rule, the intellectual giants who, "like torches, have consumed themselves for the enlightenment of mankind," were very fond of good living. The bran-bread and non-carnivorous thinkers and writers, from Diogenes to Sylvester Graham, do not occupy a large space in history nor figure brilliantly on its pages. Shakspeare in his early youth hankered after the fat bucks in Sir Thomas Lucy's park, and in later life indulged in jolly dinners with rare Ben Jonson at the Mermaid. Dr. Johnson, the "Behemoth of Literature," scoffs at "people who have a foolish way of not minding or pretending not to mind what they eat," and declares that he who does not study his stomach "will hardly mind anything else." The Doctor's particular weakness was veal pie, which is not a bad thing when the pastry is made by an expert and the contents duly seasoned ; but we regret to say that he marred his reputation as an aristologist by

eating lobster sauce with his plum-pudding. We honor him, however, for having left on record an emphatic protest against the Scotch abomination called a *haggis*, which, according to Perry, is composed of the entrails of a sheep, chopped up with onions, herbs, and suet, and boiled in the sheep's *maw*. What a Scotch bagpipe is to the ear, a Scotch haggis must be to the palate. Milton, notwithstanding his puritanism, is said to have fed his peerless muse with the choicest provender, and to have regarded a banquet missed as a paradise lost. His imitator, the bard of the "Seasons," was furiously fond of fruits, and in the autumn was accustomed to nibble at the peaches in his own garden as they hung temptingly in the sun. He always bit them on the red side, we are told, thus displaying the same taste for the florid in his appetite that is conspicuous in his poetry. That "solid man" in philosophy, Lord Bacon, loved dainties almost as well as bribes, and one of his biographers asserts that he caught the pulmonary complaint of which he died while engaged in stuffing a capon with snow! Even the pious Fenelon had charming ideas on the subject of good cheer, and sometimes wrote like an inspired voluptuary. In his "*Voyage dans l'Ile des Plaisirs*" he gives a description of the way in which the people of the mythical land of Cocagne enjoyed themselves which makes the palate tingle. Cocagne, according to the philologists, is from *coquere*, "to cook," but Fenelon's Cocagnese have no

trouble whatever with their viands, their dinners being gotten up in the most sumptuous style by culinary enchantment. According to Dr. Doran, however (who has given us, in his "Table Traits with Something on Them," a complete vade-mecum for the curious gastronome), the good archbishop borrowed the idea of his epicurean paradise from the Greek poet Teleclides, who thus (through the medium of a free translation) tells us how the world lived and junketed in its golden youth:

Saturn loquitur. "I will tell you what sort of life I vouchsafed to men in the early ages of creation: In the first place, peace reigned universally, and was as common as the water you wash your hands with. Fear and disease were entirely unknown, and the earth provided spontaneously for every human want; the rivers then poured cataracts of wine into the valleys, and cakes disputed with loaves to get into the mouth of man as he walked abroad, supplicating to be eaten, and giving assurances of excellent flavor and quality; the tables were covered with fish, which floated into the kitchens, and courteously put themselves to roast; by the side of the dinner-couches rolled streams of sauces, bearing with them ready-roasted joints; while rivulets full of ragouts flowed near the guests, who dipped in and took therefrom according to their fancy. Every one could eat of what he pleased, and all that he ate was sweet, succulent. There were countless pomegranate seeds, for seasoning; little pâtés, done to a turn, insinuated themselves between the lips of the banqueters; and tarts got smashed, in endeavoring to force themselves into the throat. Children played with delicacies as with toys; and the men were gigantic in height and obese in figure."

A rare speech this, but singularly inconsistent from the mouth of Saturn. Surely the poet had forgotten that the old god, as described in the Greek mythology, was of so indiscriminating a palate that he swallowed a paving-stone under the supposition that it was his infant son Jupiter. The thick-headed deity, who did not know a baby from a boulder, could never have given utterance to such a pleasant rhapsody. Besides the legend of Fenelon, there is another and more familiar story, which seems to us to have been borrowed from Teleclides ; to wit, that myth of our childhood's days which treats of a land where the streets are paved with gold, and the houses tiled with pancakes, and roast turkeys, with knives and forks for legs, promenade the thoroughfares, crying out, "Come eat me!"

It is unnecessary to multiply instances of the epicurean proclivities of authors. From time immemorial they have lived on the fat of the land to the extent of their pecuniary ability, and often beyond it. The few exceptions are not worth naming—they merely establish the rule. Long may the literati continue to be critics in cookery as well as in matters more ethereal, and Heaven send them the means of gratifying their praiseworthy dietetic tastes! If we could choose their domicile for them, they should live in the

—— "Land of Cocagne,
That elysium of all that is *friand* and nice,
Where for hail they have bonbons, and claret for rain,
And the skaters in winter show off on cream ice.

“Where so ready all nature its cookery yields
Maccaroni au parmesan grows in the fields;
Little birds fly about with the true pheasant taint,
And the geese are all born with a liver complaint.”

To descend from the poetic to the practical: we intimated in a former article that America had much to learn in the esthetics of gastronomy. Touching numberless delicious relishes seen on the tables—especially the breakfast and luncheon tables—of “the English epicures,” Yankee Doodle and eke his wife are lamentably ignorant. Potted meats, potted shell-fish, and potted game are not on our bill of fare. Every well-to-do English family that pretends to *live well* has store of these *bonnes bouches* to set before its guests. The lady of the house prepares them or superintends their preparation, and whosoever has not tasted the transatlantic potted lobster, potted shrimps, potted crab, potted veal, potted beef, and potted game, has missed the same number of exquisite sensations. They are not costly luxuries—far from it—nor is it difficult to manufacture them. The meats are thoroughly boiled, then chopped, and then, with the addition of a little butter, reduced to a paste in a mortar. During the latter process they are judiciously seasoned—don’t forget the mace. Next they are closely packed down in jars, and covered at the top with a layer about an eighth of an inch in thickness of liquefied butter. Winged game is generally potted whole, enveloped in

a strong gravy, which becomes gelid when cold; but sometimes the birds are boned, and then prepared and potted like the ordinary meats. Lobsters and crabs are usually potted in the same way; but shrimps should always be put down as they come from the *husk*, and the interstices in the jar, after the contents have been pretty closely wedged together by pressure, should be filled up with melted fresh butter. In all these articles much depends upon the seasoning—in fact, seasoning is the very soul of cookery.

You can buy imported potted meats, shell-fish, etc., at some of the leading grocery and provision stores, but they are no more like the articles bearing the same names that are made in English homes than *vin ordinaire* is like sparkling Burgundy. They are manufactured for this market after cheap recipes, lack richness and flavor to begin with, and are more or less spoiled by the voyage. Things potted, to be worth eating, must be prepared at home. If American ladies will try their hands at these delicacies, we promise them the thanks of their countrymen.

But have we not made a rather sharp descent from the attic heights of literature to the kitchen depths of culinary detail? We commenced among the poets, philosophers, and metaphysicians, and here we are, so to speak, with our sleeves rolled up, and disguised in a white cap and apron, standing by the kitchen dresser. Well, what of it!—did not the great Lucullus, who

won Heaven knows how many victories for Rome over the barbarians, now and then flourish a ladle as the *chef* of his own *cuisine*?

SAVORY STANZAS FOR NOVEMBER.

POETS, who skyward mount and feed on ether,
Far out of sight, among the starry host,
Soar when you list, and tell us what you see there ;
Of such excursions 'tis not mine to boast.
My muse is not a transcendental ghost,
But plump and buxom, and exceeding rich in
Suggestive hints (of which I make the most)
Touching *morceaux* to epicures bewitching—
In short, an aproned muse whose Helicon 's the kitchen.

Her I invoke : forth at my call she rushes,
Not downward, on a cloud, through fields of air,
But, with her cheeks suffused with fiery blushes,
Trips, blithely singing, up the kitchen stair.
Lo ! in her hand November's bill of fare—
A goodly scroll, a muster-roll of dishes
To make a fasting saint his Lent forswear,
And fill his pious mind with carnal wishes—
Longings for soups and joints, and game and flaky fishes.

Talk of your Pegasus !—were he a draught-horse
He ne'er could draw the contents of her carte,
'Twould tire a lager-brewery's strongest shaft-horse,
And break the noble beast's *chevalric* heart.

Oh! what material for the hand of Art!

Could I but write like (shall I say like Tennyson?)

How would I make the gastric juices start

With a voluptuous, sensuous, thrilling benison,

On woodcock, partridge, quail, and inch-deep-fattened venison!

Now are domestic meats most rich in juices,

Now are all fowls domestic in their prime,

And under Taste's *experimentum crucis*

Each yields a flavor one may call sublime.

November, gentle epicure, 's the time

When palates, touched to finest issues, tingle.

Hark! to the dinner-bell's inviting chime;

It bids us all for one grand purpose mingle,

And "makes the whole world kin" with its harmonious jingle.

Come, let us dine. Mock turtle to commence with;

Sheepshead—the slice beneath the dorsal fin;

Boiled turkey—celery sauce it is immense with;

Ven'son, with port wine gravy, not too thin;

A few scalloped oysters now throw in,

And overlay with canvas-back, done lightly.

Close with some Charlotte Russe, and for your bin,

Sauterne; or, if you choose a tipple sprightly,

Try effervescent Hock, a wine that suits me—slightly!

'Twould fill a page to catalogue each edible

To which the month a perfect flavor gives;

Oh! Thomas Hood, 'twas gracelessness incredible

To link its name with grewsome negatives.

Now lean men, loose in fiber as old sieves,

Laugh and grow fat, and age begins to royster.

In summer man exists, but now he lives.

Even barefoot friars, pacing in their cloisters,
Sigh, as they tell their beads, for plump November oysters.

Oysters! One needs the genius of a Shelley

To fitly hymn those treasures of the sea—

Salacious dabs of appetizing jelly!

Sources of epigastric ecstasy.

And lobsters, too, as firm as firm can be,

And crimped lettuce, tempt us in November,

With scores of cates from forest, lake, and lea—

Dainties each gourmand's palate will remember,
That might a glow awake in life's expiring ember.

Cooks, do your best; don't mar the savory bounties

By Heaven vouchsafed to bless the inner man;

The choicest dish, ill-cooked, of no account is,

So place not nature's luxuries under ban.

Look to your seasonings well in pot and pan:

The finest *goût* the easiest to deprave is

With sauces made on "the Canal Street plan."

See that you give us rich and generous gravies,
With which the Loyal League might relish e'en Jeff. Davis.

Enough. Dear kitchen muse, I now dismiss thee

With homage worthy of thy high desert.

Methinks, at parting, I could almost kiss thee,

Enchanting epicurean expert!

But thou art far too circumspect to flirt;

So fare thee well (so I desire to fare, too),

And oh, endow our Irish help, inert,

With skill, sound judgment, necessary care, too,
The longings to fulfill that tasteful flesh is heir to.

EPIGASTRIC POETRY.

WE hear much in these days from the cognoscenti of high art, of Raphael, Michael Angelo, Leonardo da Vinci, and other high old artists. But after all this is a realistic rather than an idealistic age, and seven-eighths of the community relish the lifelike materialism of the Dusseldorf school more keenly than the etherealism of the great Italian masters. "Saints and Angels," say these unsentimental persons, "we have never seen. The emanations of high art which purport to represent them may be like them or they may not. But we know that the jolly interior of yon German wine-cellar, with its group of faces full of animal enjoyment, is true to nature, for it reminds us of scenes we have ourselves witnessed." Of course remarks of this kind are usually made *sotto voce*, for the virtuosos have pronounced materialistic painting to be an inferior branch of art, and when such Sir Oracles open their mouths, common folk must open *their* mouths too, and swallow, with respectful deference, if not with entire assent, the dictum of the critics.

In poetry, as in pictures, the public taste inclines more to the familiar and simple than to the mystic and

supernal, and sometimes, we regret to say, the liking for extreme simplicity is discredibly strong. For example, Tupper is more generally read and admired in England than Milton. There is, however, an agreeable mean between puerility and sublimity, and the bard who strikes this midway track, and tunes his unpretending lyre to a popular theme as he pursues it, may chance to throw off a few rhymes now and then that will ring pleasantly in the popular ear. In our epicurean articles we have once or twice essayed to sing at table. Song is the natural language of content, and if ever that delightful condition is realized, it is by the epicure while contemplating the well-cooked food upon which he is about to wreak himself. We are variously constituted, mentally and physically. The moon may inspire one man with poetic thoughts, mutton-chops with *sauce piquante* another. Emotions as deep and tender may be excited in the bosom of an aristologist by the savor of a canvas-back duck, as could be kindled in the soul of a lover by the softest sigh of the lady of his heart. Such at least is our theory; and we can not help believing that the individual whose aspirations are for perfection in things edible is much more to be envied than the idolater who thinks he has found it sphered in crinoline. If Petrarch had been more of a *bon vivant*, he would have been less of a "spooney." We are free to say that the directest road to *our* imagination is through

the great sympathetic nerve, which, it may be as well to state, for the information of the non-physiological, takes its rise in the center of the epigastrium, and communicates at one end with the whole nutritive system, and at the other with the brain. To the electric influence exercised by that sensitive fiber over its upper terminus, the reader will please to ascribe whatever of merit or demerit may belong to the following rhymes :

TO A ROAST SIRLOIN.

Charles Second did one wise thing in his life ;
 He laid on thee, rare joint, the accolade,
 With Appetite's good sword, the carving-knife—
 A trustier weapon than his Worcester blade.
 Of the ROUND TABLE, when he made thee knight,
 And bade his courtiers know thee as Sir Loin,
 'Twas deed as worthy of a royal wight
 As William's fiercer sword-stroke at the Boyne.

The hostile tints of England's roses twain
 Seem in thy savory fat and lean to blend,
 And from the under-loin what juices rain
 On the rapt palate ! What a thrill they send
 Through all the inner man, while sense to soul
 The tingling ecstasy communicates !
 But, ah ! such themes mock Poesy's control,
 Their only fitting exponents are plates.

TO A SWEETBREAD.

From thy nest
 In the breast

Of a thing without mind,
 Wert thou taken, to rest
 In a spot more refined.
 Egg-and-bread-crumbed morceau!
 Cooked (not fast, nor too slow)
 To a ravishing brown,
 The way thou shouldst go
 Let me marshal thee down!

TO A BOILED BASS.

Stretched on a napkin of diaper fine,
 Welcome, thrice welcome, *bonne bouche* of the brine!
 Now for a slice from thy delicate side,
 Scooped with a silver knife, deftly applied:
 Smother in egg-sauce the morsel, and bring
 Hither the luxury fit for a king.
 Glorious! ecstatic! I swear by the mass
 Naught gives a tone to the palate like bass.

"Fish should swim twice," says the proverb—bring wine:
 Here's to thee, fish of a flavor divine!
 Where didst thou cruise in the summer-time, say?
 Off Coney Island, Squam Beach, or Cape May?
 Didst thou behold in the surf of the Sound
 Upper crust Venuses "bobbing around?"
 Or, coasting Newport, hear Fashion's Lurlines
 Shrieking in front of their bathing-machines?
 Near Blackwell's Island didst e'er cut a shine,
 Where there are land-sharks with jackets like thine?
 At Sandy Hook with a hook wert thou ta'en,
 Or slily meshed in the mouth of the Seine?

Well, what's the odds where thy time has been passed,
 Where or by whom thou wert captured at last?
 Man with some instrument 's certain, alas!
 One time or other to pitch into bass.

Nobler thy fate, though, and prouder thy shrine—
 Carved with pure silver, embalmed in rare wine—
 Than if the gulls, in thy juvenile day,
 Had from the surf borne thee, squirming, away,
 Up to some ledge, 'twixt the ocean and sky,
 Where they bolt raw the unfortunate fry.
 Better for thee than such gluttonous haste,
 Thus to be relished by Reason and Taste;
 Thus to be hymned: fill the glasses again,
 I'd be a fish if the sea were champagne!
 Bid the band play as the bottle we pass,
 Strike the big bass-drum in honor of bass!

LINES TO A WILD DUCK.

A duck has been immortalized by Bryant—
 A wild one, too.
 Sweetly he hymned the creature blithe and buoyant,
 Cleaving the blue.

But whoso says the duck through ether flying,
 Seen by the bard,
 Equaled the canvas-back before me lying,
 Tells a *canard*.

Done to a turn! The flesh a dark carnation,
 The gravy red.

Four slices from the breast: on such a ration
Gods never fed!

Bryant, go to! To say thy lyric *ghost* duck,
Traced on the sky,
Was worthy to be named with this fine *roast* duck,
Is "all my eye!"

*A THANKSGIVING RHAPSODY.**

THE Pilgrim Fathers are entitled to the thanks of the present generation for having instituted this soul-and-body-comforting festival. It must be confessed, however, that they prefaced the good deed with a heathenish wrong. They wiped out Christmas, declaring it to be an invention of the evil one, or rather, to use their own phraseology, "a sinful device of papists and prelatists," of all whose forms and ceremonies they religiously believed the "enemy of souls" to be the original suggestor. Their intolerance, it must be admitted, was not utterly without excuse. They had a crow to pluck with the haughty churchmen by whom they had been driven from house and home, and Christmas being the most important feast in the calendar of Episcopacy, they determined to show their antipathy to the "sons of Belial" across the water by abolishing the great Christian holiday. Accordingly, they made its observance punishable by fine, imprisonment, and the pillory, and "Thanksgiving" reigned in its stead. Even at this day, although the "blue laws," like their steeple-crowned enactors, have long been consigned to the limbo of things lost on earth, the ancient festival

* Written in November, 1865.

of the Christian Church comes but lamely off in New England. In this connection it may be mentioned that some years after the New England Puritans had commenced returning thanks, in public, for their providential escape from "papisty and prelacy," the tables were turned upon them by an order commanding them to be piously grateful for the restoration of the "man of sin," Charles the Second, A. D. 1661. The edict must have been rather afflicting to the old Cromwellians; but, being a prudent and thoughtful race, they pocketed their regrets, bowed stiffly to the rising sun, thanked Heaven for what could not be cured, and must, therefore, be endured, and ate and drank success to his most sacred majesty with sensual relish and commendable equanimity.

Saint-like men as they were, and with faces set as flint against billing and cooing on the Day of Rest, the early Puritans were not without their amiable carnal weaknesses. It is recorded of them that they highly enjoyed their Thanksgiving feasts; eating and drinking, indeed, with a solemnity becoming patriarchs who birched their boys for smiling in the conventicle, and denounced Sabbatical salutes as tending to perdition, but nevertheless laying in the supplies with infinite gusto. Nor is the present generation of New Englanders unworthy, in this regard, of its worshipful progenitors, although, if we may judge from the portly portraits of some of the ancient colonial Yankees, the

moderns of the race scarcely thrive as well on good provender as did their noble ancestors. Perhaps this is because the minds of the latter-day Down-easters are of a keener, sharper, and more restless nature than those of their forefathers, and consequently destroy, by the process of abrasion, the fat that would otherwise round off and cushion the angles of their frames. Or it may be that hereditary dyspepsia, originally engendered by over-indulgence at Thanksgiving banquets, is the source of the attenuation. Be this as it may, the New Englanders of the present era are, as a people, somewhat spare, and there are irreverent vulgarians among us who are discourteous enough to call them slabsided. Far be it from us to countenance such jests on the configuration of our excellent neighbors. We honor them, we honor their paternal and maternal derivatives, and we honor and do honor to the glorious banquet of which the latter were the originators. Our fork hand must forget the cunning which impels it from the plate towards the palate, our palate be incapable of the sensations of which it even now experiences the premonitory tinglings, ere we can join in casting a slur upon the thanksgivers of New England or their antecedents.

Preparations are now being made throughout the length and breadth of the land for spreading the Thanksgiving board. Of that anon. Grace before meat. Until we have improved the occasion the din-

ner can wait. Why have we been called upon to eat it?—for, as the greater always includes the less, of course the call to give thanks includes the call to the festal table. (First the “church-going bell,” then the dinner tocsin, which is, in fact, the tocsin of the epigastrium, and not, as Byron erroneously and profanely sings, the tocsin of the soul.)

We all know that there is deep cause for gratitude. There ought to be a thanksgiving hymn swelling in every American heart, ready to burst forth spontaneously on the day of jubilee. Last year at this time we were thanking Heaven that the sword was doing its terrible but necessary work upon misguided men of our own race—our kindred. Now we welcome them back from their mad estrangement, subdued and repentant, and forgive them as we hope to be forgiven. The Union is being re-established; let the people to their knees. God thanked, let them go forth from the temples of worship happy and hopeful, saying gently, every one to his neighbor, “On earth peace, good-will to men.” No more strife, no more bulletins of slaughter, no more marshaling of fathers against sons, and brothers against brothers. It is past. Raise the thanksgiving psalm; let it roll on through the firmament, one unbroken wave of grateful praise, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from the forests of Maine to the cane-brakes of Texas. Truly there is an inviting opening for a lay sermon here, and, had we the gift to

translate into eloquent words the feeling that stirs within us, the task should be essayed. As it is, we forbear, and, leaving to the duly authorized shepherds the ennobling labor of purveying spiritual aliment for their flocks, proceed to discuss the good things which follow the Thanksgiving sermon, and serve as a solid practical commentary on its allusions to the bounteousness of Heaven.

Genial reader, if you have no better engagement, suppose we drop in upon a Thanksgiving party in the land of steady habits. Time and space are no obstacles to clairvoyant Fancy. Let us put ourselves *en rapport* with her. She takes the cue—we are there! Having, luckily, the “receipt of fern-seed” about us, we stand invisible. A fine old family room this we have alighted in. The furniture is antique and quaint—almost May-flowerish. So, also, is the patriarch at the head of the ample table, which groans—no, laughs—with abundance. He is hard-featured and gaunt, but not of a forbidding aspect. He reminds one of Plymouth Rock, with a flood of hospitable sunshine streaming over its rugged granite face. The old lady who faces him at the other end of the board has somewhat of a Pilgrim-motherly look about her. It would not be impossible to imagine that she had discussed the witchcraft question with Mrs. Cotton Mather; but there is a soft light in her quiet eye which is not of the days when Puritan dames lay awake o’

nights listening for the war-whoop. On either side of the board are ranged the representatives of three generations—the “bearded grain” and the “flowers that grow between.” From all points of the compass, from far and near, the old and young of the family flock, led by the instinct of affection, have come back to the old nesting-place. Some of the guests at last year’s feast may, perchance, since then have fallen before the mighty reaper—toppled down with a touch, full of years and ripe for the harvest, or cut off untimely with a ruder stroke—but there are no vacant places. In New England families there is always a large reserve of cousins ready to be drafted into the Thanksgiving ranks when re-enforcements are required. A blessing has been asked on the banquet, while we have been digressing. ‘So let us take a bird’s-eye view of the creature comforts upon which it has been invoked. Verily they are worthy of being blessed, for they have not been rendered unacceptable by evil cookery. Bear in mind, this is an old-fashioned New England home. Modern degeneracy has not yet reached it. No kick-shaws here. The turkey is a twenty-five-pounder, full-chested as a *primo basso*, tanned to an amber-brown by a judicious application of caloric, and reeking incense that is to the epicure as the smoke of battle to the war-horse, prompting him to laugh ha! ha! in anticipatory ecstasy!

At this point we are reminded of certain lines of

ours to a turkey, written in the very presence of the roasted creature, which seem in such perfect accord with the "subject matter" under consideration that we offer no apology for introducing them. Thus they read :—

TO THE FESTIVE TURKEY.

Fowl to all other fowls preferred—
 Except, perhaps, our public bird
 Of mighty beak and ponderous wing—
 Thee with a watering mouth I sing!

Bird of two meats—the brown and white—
 Which like the dual Niles unite,
 And in a single body run,
 Of tints diverse, in substance one—
 Hail to thy bosom broad and puffed!
 Plump as a maiden's cotton-stuffed.
 Hail to thy drum-sticks, dainties fine
 That served as "devils" seem divine.
 Hail to thy sidebones!—rich morceaux—
 And thy ecclesiastic nose,
 Which, to the laws of order blind,
 Nature has queerly placed behind.
 Yet scoffers vow they fitness see
 In *nose of bishop* following thee,
 And hint that ever nose of priest
 Turns eagerly toward savory feast,
 And as the shark astern, at sea,
 Tracks the doomed ship, still follows thee!

Methinks I see a dish borne in
O'er-canopied with shining tin:
From 'neath that dome a vapor rare
Curls through the hospitable air.
Presto! up goes the burnished lid,
And lo, the bird its concave hid!
I see thee, browned from crest to tail;
Bird of two meats, all hail! all hail!
Through thy round breast the keen steel glides,
Rich ichor irrigates thy sides—
"Dressing," to give the slices zest,
Rolls from thy deep protuberant chest;
Then, tunneling in search of "cates,"
The spoon thy "innards" excavates,
And forth, as from a darksome mine,
Brings treasures for which gods might pine.

Bird of the banquet! what to thee
Are all the birds of melody?
Thy "merrythought" far more I love
Than merriest music of the grove,
And in thy "gobble," deep and clear,
The *gourmand's* shibboleth I hear!
Of all earth's dainties there is none
Like thee, to thank the Lord upon,
And so receive my votive lay,
Thou king-bird of Thanksgiving Day!

But the glorious fowl is only an item—the most prominent one, however—of the goodly feast we are contemplating. While the husband, father, and grandfather—*trio juncta in uno*—is hospitably "talking tur-

key" and dealing with the bird's anatomy at one extremity of the table, the wife, mother, and grandmother—three affectionate beings rolled into one—is busy with the indispensable chicken-pie at the other. It is a mighty pasty—one that would have rejoiced the soul of the jolly Clerk of Copmanhurst—round as the shield of Douglas, and its lightly ambered crust bossed with rosettes as big as dahlias. It needs not the aid of ornament to recommend it. The pie hath that within which passeth show. But our pen shall not dwell longer upon the savory subject; it is too exciting. (With the assistance of plate and knife and fork it were a pleasing task to discuss it for half an hour.) There is great store of vegetables flanking the primary dishes: sweet potatoes, nuggets of mealy gold; the Irish tuber, beaten into a delicious compost, with cream and salt and butter, and flushed with amber by the salamander; cauliflowers, with a drawn-butter dew upon their curdled heads; and a dozen other delectables of the kitchen garden. Among the "sarces" the gelid cranberry is conspicuous—a huge conglomerate of edible rubies; and a vast brown pitcher of rare cider creams and mantles at the patriarch's elbow. Let us turn to the spacious mahogany sideboard—one of the old make, built before the finical modern *buffets* came in. What a *mob* of pies! Pumpkin, apple, mince, peach, cranberry, and plum—all gems of the oven. Look at those round lakelets

of semi-opaque golden jelly, shored in by leafy crust of a pale topaz hue. Land of the Pilgrims! if it were only for thy pumpkin-pies, we must needs love thee. What have we in the great China bowl? Apple-butter, by all that's saccharine and unctuous! Well, there *may* be more delicious confections than this, but if there be, our gastric economy is not acquainted with them. Pound for pound, we would not exchange apple-butter, scientifically prepared, for guava jelly or any of the famous Jamaica sweetmeats. The baked Indian pudding, raisin-stuffed, has not yet made its appearance. It is kept in warm abeyance until the savory solids have been dealt upon. Its aroma, however, reaches us from the kitchen, intermingled with the appetizing fragrance of many kinds of cakes that shall grace the tea-table anon. 'Ware dyspepsia—and yet who would not brave a twinge or two to be thus banqueted? Epicurean reader, sharer of our imaginary visit to this feast of fat things, are you satisfied? You *ought* to be hungry. *Abracadabra!* The spell of fancy is dissolved. We are in New York again. Go to Delmonico's and comfort your inner man with the choicest delicacies on his *carte*. But learn this beforehand: you will get nothing there comparable to such a Thanksgiving dinner as the one of which we have just taken a clairvoyant survey a *little* in advance of the November festival.

THE BROOKSIDE IN MAY.

HAST thou a gymnastic fancy, reader? Can it turn a flying somersault with ours, sixty miles through the air, into a fair pastoral and sylvan region, newly beautified by the breath of May? If so, we need no enchanted carpet or cloud-cleaving steed; our elastic imaginations shall whirl us to the goal. One, two, three, and away!

Here we are by the brookside. This baby stream was cradled among yonder hills, and these sloping meadows are its playground. See how it dances through the greensward. Hark how it sings. But there are other choristers. The pleasant treble of the meadow lark, the sharp notes of gossiping blackbirds, the sonorous twang of the bull-frog, and the semitones of clouds of ephemerae, mingle with the refrain of the rivulet at our feet, and the *pot-pourri* is cheerful and exhilarating, if not harmonious. How sweet the springtide smells. A medley of pleasant odors as well as of pleasant sounds fills the air. The groves and fields could hardly have been more fragrant when the dew and sunshine of the primal May baptized their buds and blades.

But it was not alone to "babble of green fields" that we left the "thick solitudes called social," to bivouac by the brookside. There be shapely creatures clouded with purple and orange, and bedropped with crimson, lying perdu under the ripples of this running water, waiting for what Providence may send them in the way of provant. We propose to be their evil genius, and have brought the implements with us to betray them to their ruin. Sooner, dear reader, shall you catch Mercury without his Caduceus than a veteran angler by a trout stream without his rod. Forth from thy well-worn case, old whipper of the brooks. Age has not robbed thy joints of their suppleness, nor, thank the Providence that shapes men's ends, has it yet taken the elasticity out of ours. *E pluribus unum*; the sections are one. It is easier to reconstruct a rod than a republic. Is not this a wand fit for the right hand of a naiad? A perfect taper from butt to topmost ring, light as a reed, and springy as a rapier. This multiplier, too, is a master-piece. Countless revolutions have not disorganized it, though it has immolated more victims than were ever guillotined in the *Place de Grève*. It takes not the accustomed fingers of the angler long to prepare his tackle. At the end of the transparent leader dangles a "brown hackle"—a killing fly, when the sun is shining softly through the golden mist of a May-day noon; and now for a cast. Seest thou, reader, that bit of ruffled water, this side

of the gnarled, hump-backed old witch of a willow that is stooping to catch a glimpse of her ungainly shape in the stream? Right for the center of that little eddy shall our feather-fly make wing. Deftly done, by all that's entomological! Had the lure been alive, it could not have dropped into the ripple more naturally. Aha! Credulity in a broidered coat snaps at the temptation. A noble trout, a very emperor of the brook, and hooked past all redemption. Whir-r-rr! how he makes the reel spin. See him dart from the surface, mad for freedom. Alas! lithe acrobat, thy last flip-flap is at hand. Thou'rt e'en a-drowning, for a fish may have "too much of water," as well as the fair Ophelia. It is mere folly to fight with destiny; be guided, come ashore and die peacefully on the greensward. Slip the net under him, and we'll land him gently, "as if we loved him," as old Izaak says of the worm. There he lies, poor victim of overweening confidence, panting as a hart panteth after the water-brooks, and ever and anon making ineffectual leaps streamward. Canst tell us, reader, why a captured fish always jumps toward the water, even when he can not see it? It is instinct, probably. But what is instinct? We have asked this question of naturalists, metaphysicians, and other far-seeing individuals, but, sooth to say, their replies, though eminently profound, were utterly unintelligible.

Pending the solution of the problem, let us continue

to beguile the fishes. One after another, from pool and rapid, and the whirling foam of fairy Min-ne-ha-has, we gather them in. The sun on his downward course is frescoing with prismatic hues the western wall of heaven, and the wicker basket at our belt is full of fish as rarely tinted. What shall we do with them? It were gross vandalism to consign them to the culinary mercies of the Maritornes of a village tavern. We have tried that before, and had our trout so bedeviled in the cooking that we hesitated to ask a blessing on them. Think of the sacrilege of frying brook trout in half-rancid dripping! It is rank heathenism. Why send missionaries to the Feejee islanders when the choice gifts of the Great Provider are thus misused of pagans at home? We will ask the untutored Celt who cooks the leathern steaks at yonder hostel, to put our delicate spoil into her refrigerator instead of her frying-pan. They shall to New York, packed in ice, and with our own hands we will manipulate them. But here we are at the door of the "wayside inn," and our day's sport is ended.

The "brothers of the angle," take them by and large, are not squeamishly voracious, and our little fish-story will no doubt be set down as slightly apocryphal. Nevertheless, we have really been a-May-ing among the streamlets, and have returned "edified and built up." Our back is straighter, step firmer, hand steadier, head lighter than before we

went into "the bush." The nymph Spring is not quite as forward as she was last year, but we happened to catch her in a melting mood, with a warm sun-flush on her cheek, and a very pleasant time we had together. Heaven's health-commissioners—gentle breezes vitalized with the fresh breathings of tender grass and unfolding blossoms—are very potent to preserve in their full vigor body and soul, and as we strolled hither and thither, along the highways and by-ways of nature's green sanatorium, it seemed to us as if the blue fiend, Cholera, were as effectually barred out of that sweet pleasaunce as if it had been guarded, like Eden of old, with flaming swords.

Man made the town, and we regret to say he made it very dirty. Returning to Gotham after our rural wanderings, we loathed its brick and mortar, its unbrooklike gutters, its unnatural smells. True, it had a flavor of green things, but they had decayed. The warm spring sunshine that was creating vegetation in the country was decomposing it in the city, and as we snuffed the vari-scented atmosphere we sympathized with Coleridge's sensations in the streets of Cologne. Our sanctum looked dismal contrasted with the beauty and the brightness we had just left. Dust lay thick upon the desk and choked the inkstand, and, as we feather-brushed the one and refilled the other, we made a vow to the pastoral gods to return with all convenient speed to their bucolic realm.

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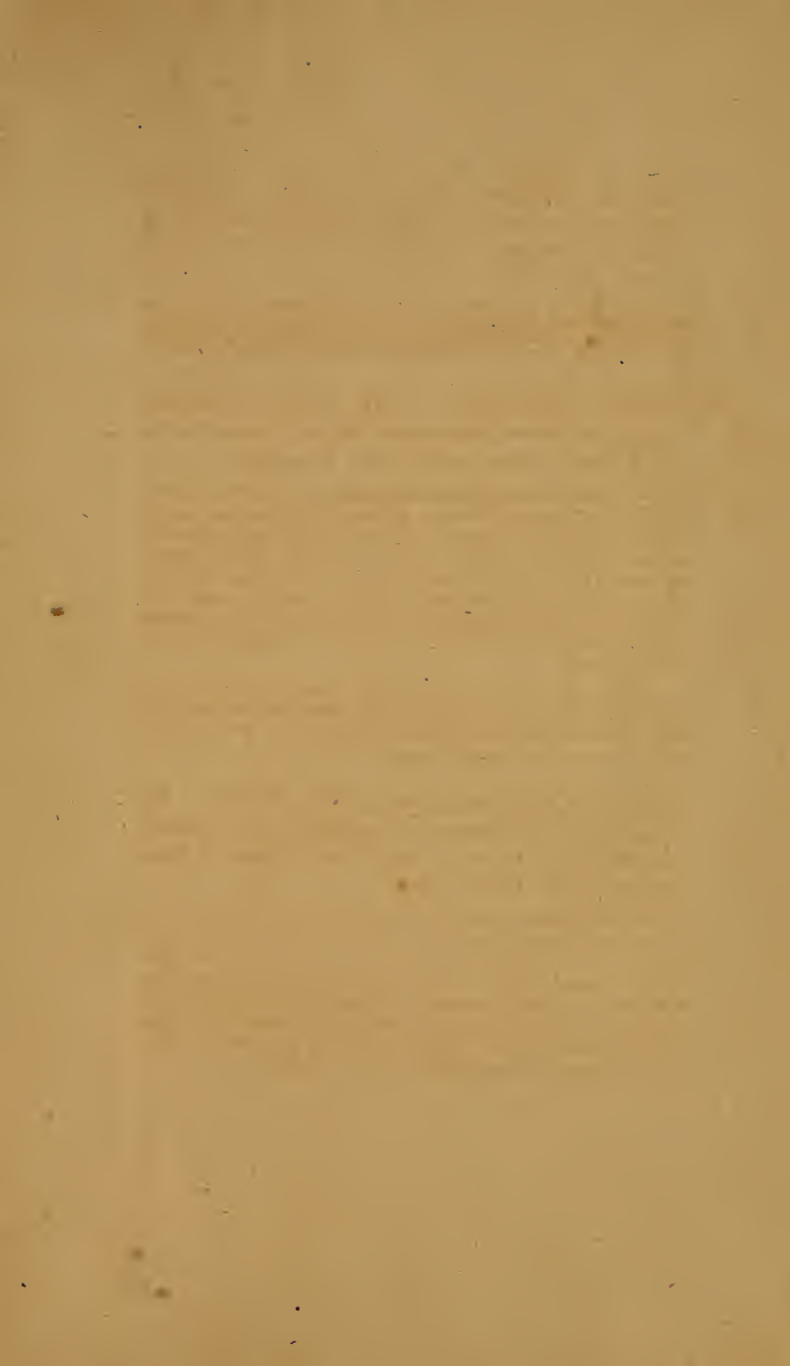
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